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THE WAGER

By L. McMANUS



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THE WAGER

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1. Limerick, Ireland (City) -
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THE WAGER

BY

L. McMANUS

Author of "Lally of the Brigade," "Red Star," etc., etc.

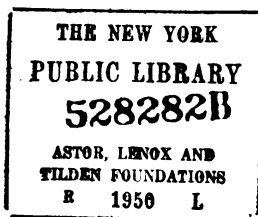


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The Wager

**A passage from the Memoirs of Brigadier Niall MacGuinness of Iveagh,
sometime Captain in Sarsfield's Horse, and Later in the Service of His Most
Christian Majesty, Louis XIV., King of France.**

This story is laid in Limerick during the siege of 1690.

The Wager

CHAPTER I

I HAD left the card-table and gone to the window when O’Kavanagh came in. He stood looking across the room for a moment, his white wolfhound by his side, before the players saw him and greeted him with a shout. A pile of gold lay before Baldearg O’Donnell, the Irish-Spaniard, who had been bawling out his adventures in Spain and Austria in the pauses of the game. For the rest, King James’s brass tokens served as currency. The guns had ceased firing for more than an hour, and the hot August air, as it came through the open window, brought a smell of apples from the orchard beneath.

“Iveagh! I want Iveagh!” called O’Kavanagh. “No, not to-night, lads,” he added, looking at the men who had invited him to join their game. “Not to-night; though those yellow boys are to

be won. Iveagh!" he fixed his eyes upon me, "are you asleep?"

I turned and regarded him with silent attention. One of the players grinned. "Iveagh has had a run of ill luck," he said. "The last gold gone and these damned brass coin to pay in. They did better service as cannon. I pray the saints that Galloping Hogan's Rapparees fall on the pay chests of the Williamites."

"Much you would see of it then," laughed O'Kavanagh. "Well, there is always a harvest of gold for our swords in Spain and France."

An angry murmur ran round the room. Two days before M. Lauzun, who was in command of the French, had marched his men out of Limerick, and every Irish heart was hot with anger towards him.

"Yes, we can be exiles," said one of the men bitterly; "many of us here have learned that."

"There is something afoot to-night," said O'Kavanagh, and looked as if he had further to say.

"What! a sortie?" and young O'Carroll threw aside his cards and sprang to his feet. "My soul to the devil, that is grand!" he cried. "Now that we are rid of the Duke of Tyrconnell and the

Frenchman, we shall not mold behind these walls!"

"There is no sortie to-night," replied O'Kavanagh, "but orders have gone to the Horse, and what that means only the generals know. Iveagh," he looked again at me, "stir yourself, man. I bring you a lady's command."

"What lady?" I demanded.

"Ethne of the hearts?" sneered Purcell of the artillery, raising his bright dark eyes from his cards.

O'Kavanagh took no notice of the question. "Lady Honoria wishes to see you," he said, addressing me. I stood erect at once, and having buckled on my sword, replaced my steel piece over my red coat. While thus engaged I heard Baldearg O'Donnell's voice as it rose above the rest of the men.

"Time enough, O'Carroll and gentlemen," he exclaimed, "time enough for a sortie! The siege is but a day old. The French say our fortifications could be battered down with roasted apples. Well, Saneta Maria! we know the kind of crabs to send back. I have pledged my gold and diamond cross that we stand this Leaguer. Every man here knows that! Would I have staked the

noble gift of His Majesty the Emperor of Austria, which His Majesty gave me for holding my position half a day against the Turks and imperiling my life in a matter I will not now enlarge upon—would I, I say, risk the Imperial Cross if I thought our swords could not hold the city?”

“No, indeed,” replied Purcell, suddenly looking at me, “for diamonds are precious.”

I kept my eyes aloof from the man, and was about to walk to the door, when he filled a glass with Burgundy.

“A toast, gentlemen, before you leave,” he said, speaking louder than was his wont. “A toast, Colonel O'Donnell and comrades! We will drink to the pledge, to the cross, to the defeat of Monsieur Lauzun.”

I went to the table and filled a glass with wine; then I held it up, and every man rising to his feet, we cried: “To the cross! To the defeat of Lauzun!” Young O'Carroll, with swift nervous hand, poured fresh wine into his glass, and in a thin boyish voice called: “Another toast! Another! Comrades, to lovely Ethne of the hearts!”

A storm of acclamation followed, while O'Donnell flushed like a girl and O'Kavanagh grew a

dusky red. I put down my glass and went to the door. Ethne of the hearts was unknown to me, but I knew that she had captured more men in the camp than the foe, and that O'Kavanagh, my friend, had been befooled by her wiles. I was in no mood just then to drink to the witch.

"Halt, my lord, halt!" cried O'Donnell as I opened the door. "You must take the toast!"

"On your word that she is beautiful," I answered in French. "I am a free man, M. le Colonel, and your slaves would have me join your rank and put on fetters." I looked round the group and smiled.

"Shall we force him to take the toast?" said O'Donnell, but as he spoke Purcell rose. He was a thin, wiry-looking man, with beady, restless eyes, and a long pointed nose, reddened from the bridge. He was my foe, and I knew it.

"I'm to my battery," he said, addressing me. "My lord, you are right. Your service in Con-nacht has saved you from being caught in the mesh of one of the most impudent little witches that has ever made hearts her playthings. Strange how we men can think of love and women with death knocking at our door."

"Purcell's heart is as withered as a last year's

crab," said O'Kavanagh, but though he jested I saw that he was angry. I stepped aside to let the man pass, not wishing to have his company in the street. O'Donnell broke into a laugh.

"We will let Iveagh go!" he said. "He is handsome, but, a shroud on me! has the cold eyes of the North, and lovely Ethne would wish to melt them should she see him. There goes a bugle! Ten minutes before the redoubts! Back to our game, lads!"

He seized the cards, old worn ones, on which Puritans figured as the knaves, and I left the room. All my pay had gone that night, as well as most of the gold I had brought from France, and the mending of my fortunes depended upon the triumph of the Jacobite cause. My father's great possessions in Uladh had been confiscated; the King had promised to restore them; and as I stepped into the street I was aware I had little left but my sword.

Hearing footsteps behind me, I paused and looked back to see O'Kavanagh.

"I have a mind to challenge you," he said, as he joined me, his face darkening.

I smiled, but did not reply; we both knew that there was a strong friendship between us. "Do

you hear that shout?" I said, after a moment's silence. "It comes from the Danes. They hold the rath on the left, and boast that their forefathers made it."

We stood and listened for a moment. A long, faint cheer came across the water; then we walked on. The sky still held the last of the pale opalescent tint of the evening light as we turned into Great Street, which ran across King's Island from the Castle to Ball's Bridge. The flare of lamps was springing up in the windows of the houses, and here and there groups of women leaned from the casements. From a neighboring lane the tramp of a body of men passing out to the redoubts came with a steady beat in the still air and between the beleaguered city and the enemy's camp the broad Shannon rolled, holding the reflection of the dying glow in its central waters.

Suddenly a girl with her face veiled looked down from an upper window. She leaned forward with something intent and watchful in her attitude.

"Pardon me, gentlemen," she said in a clear, soft voice, "on which side lie the Dutch?"

We paused at once and raised our hats. "To

the southeast, bean-uasal (lady)," I answered: "opposite Irishtown."

"Is it true that the French soldiers under the Count Lauzun and the Duke of Tyrconnell have left us?"

"Quite true, bean-uasal. They have retired on Galway. We, the Irish, hold the town."

She made no reply and drew back. We walked on, and I heard O'Kavanagh speaking to himself. "I could swear that I know that voice," he muttered, and turned his head to look at the house.

I made no comment. For five months he had been in the thrall of the will-o'-the-wisp girl Ethne, and I hoped to rescue him from her wiles. I was aware that, being a man, there might be an element of danger in the attempt for myself. But I meant to try, for I believed her false; cruel to her lovers, false to our cause.

Presently we heard the sound of chanting coming from the cathedral. Our priests knew that only an ill-armed and but half-disciplined army lay between themselves and death and exile. Within the walls of the city our ancient faith was making its last stand, and the prayers went up, wrung from the hearts of men who looked for hope across their despair.

O’Kavanagh and I crossed the street to General Sarsfield’s house. A cresset, hung above the door, flung a blurred light on the soldier on guard and on a group of men gathered at the entrance, officers belonging to the Horse. It was evident from their faces that they had heard some tidings of importance.

“What news?” we asked.

“That of the highest moment, if true,” replied one of the men. “A deserter reports that the battering train of the Prince of Orange is on its way from Cashel under a small escort.”

“It is true!” exclaimed O’Kavanagh. “Fitzgerald told me that orders had been sent to the cavalry camp.”

“Then the city is saved,” I cried; and a cheer broke from some of the men. There were, however, one or two serious faces among the group.

“The risk is too great,” remarked a tall officer, abruptly, one of the new levies. “We have to do with a greater captain than Schomberg. Orange has eyes everywhere.”

“We shall hear what Sarsfield says,” I answered lightly, and entered the house, for if I was to be in whatever was forward that night I must get through my interview at once. I found myself in

the twilight of the long, wide hall, and as I tried to see through the gloom a servant approached with a lamp. Hearing my errand, he led me up the stair. He was an old man with sunken eyes and tremulous lips.

As I ascended an officer clattered down. In the dim light his scarlet coat and glittering cuirass showed like the sudden flame of a torch. The boards rang to the clang of his scabbard and spurred feet as he hurried on. He was Fitzgerald, Sarsfield's aid-de-camp.

"Ah, Iveagh," he cried, "there is work before us! Sarsfield makes a dash for the guns. Five hundred swords are to be ready at midnight."

He swung past, waving his hand, and I felt the blood leap in my veins. In the pause that followed the servant held his lamp high and looked in my face.

"Duine uasal (sir)," he said, "death will have the full harvest this autumn of men dead in young manhood. It is said that a great, high, piercing voice came from the Shannon and went on with the pitiful sobbing to the woods of Cratloe."

I laughed. Though a Gael from the North, I did not believe in omens. I had spent twelve of my twenty-four years in France, and held that

one's own will could avert the darkest fate. The old man drew a deep breath.

"Your honor, there are brave hearts in the city," he croaked, "but what can they do against the great army out there? By my soul, nothing! It is the curse, but it is true, the Sassenagh will pour through the breaches in a few days."

I bade him be silent; and, muttering, he went up the steps. On reaching the corridor he approached a door and knocked. I heard Lady Honoria's voice answer, and he entered the room. A minute later he returned and told me to go in.

I obeyed and found myself in a small room whose walls were hung with arras. Through the open window I saw to the south the light of the enemy's camp, yellow and murky under the white stars.

Lady Honoria sat by an oval table, her face framed in her hands. She was pretty and young, and devoted to her husband. The deep lace that edged her sleeves had fallen back from her white, rounded arms, and showed the curve of the elbows. Her hair lay in little curls on her forehead, her fine eyes were troubled.

I bowed low and she bade me be seated. "You have met Captain O'Kavanagh, my lord?"

"Yes, madam," I replied, "and he gave me your message."

"You have not delayed. I thank you for that," she said. "My Lord Iveagh, my husband has spoken of you as an officer of valor and honor."

I bowed again; to be praised by Sarsfield was an honor each man in the army coveted. I had gained his favor, I know, by my work in Con-nacht.

"Now, I require an officer of valor and honor, who will serve me in a difficult matter and keep my errand a secret. May I claim your help?"

"Without doubt, madam."

She looked at me steadily for some moments; then her brows knitted and her eyes left my face. "My service may put your life and liberty in peril," she continued. "Are you still ready to come to my aid?"

I replied I was. Knight errantry had been dead for two centuries; but it was my general's wife who spoke, and her face was fair.

She smiled charmingly, then her eyes clouded again. "I have chosen you, my lord," she said sweetly, "not alone because of the high character that General Sarsfield has given you, but because you have lived so long in France. Should a mis-

chance overtake you, you can pass as one of Callimot's officers."

I thanked her for her consideration, and for having honored me by her confidence. But I thought, too, of her husband's ride and the dash for the guns that night.

"I fear"—her voice sank—"that I have the death of a young girl on my hands. Will you seek her, will you save her? She is my friend, and, alas, she will have met her end—should she be dead—through her devotion to me."

I looked grave and attentive, but did not speak. Lady Honoria went on: "You know," she said, "that two days ago I was in the house that stands in the orchard beyond the city wall. Then the cry came that the Dutch were advancing, and I and my friends were sent into King's Island. You may be sure that we ladies went hurriedly, our wits scattered by the tidings."

"I saw to the burning of the house," I replied, "I saved such of your things as I could."

The tears sprang to her eyes. "I thank you," she answered, "but I had rather that all that belonged to me were lost so that one thing were saved."

"And this one thing?" I asked, thinking that

her gratitude was small, especially as I and my men had been fired on by the Dutch horse.

Her hands fell from her face with a gesture of distress. "The diamond cross!" she exclaimed; "the diamond cross that Colonel O'Donnell placed in my charge."

I started, then looked at her with surprise and sympathy. But a week before there had been a great gathering of officers, French and Irish, in that very house in the orchard. And it was then that that ape, the Duke de Lauzun, he whom France had sent with troops to our aid, had asked in contempt "why the English should bring cannon against fortifications (meaning the city's) that could be battered down with roasted apples." At which taunt Baldearg O'Donnell, newly arrived from Spain, had sprung to his feet, and called out in the hearing of the whole room that he would wager the cross that had been given him by the Emperor of Austria that the Irish would hold Limerick. The Frenchmen had jeered, for they believed that the city would be carried in an hour, and the Duke of Tyrconnell himself exclaimed that it would be madness to defend the place. But O'Donnell again repeated his challenge, and Lauzun, with a sneer, had accepted it,

promising to send us a cannon should he lose. Then, in the eyes of all, O'Donnell had given his cross into the hands of Lady Honoria, for her to hold till Limerick fell or the siege was raised. I had seen the Frenchmen laugh and had heard them congratulate Lauzun upon his certainty of winning the bet. And now the cross was gone.

“MacGuinness of Iveagh, this is what happened,” the tears began to fall from her eyes. “I have or had a small iron box covered with claret velvet. I put the cross in this box, after you had asked me to allow you to look at it. The box I placed in a recess in the wall near the window in the second room of the hall on the right. A door hid the recess. When I fled from the house, alas, I forgot my charge, I forgot the cross. Only when I came here did I remember that I had left it behind. I was ashamed to tell any one of my neglect, not even could I confide in my husband. But Ethne Ni Brien forced my secret from me, seeing my constant tears. And she said that she would go to the house and search the ruins and find the cross. She vowed that she could find it, and, my lord, though I begged her not to run such a dreadful risk, she went, and now I have her death or captivity on my soul.”

This was indeed startling news. "Her act was madness," I exclaimed. "Our guns have been trained in that direction all day. The house stands not a hundred yards from the Dutch camp."

Lady Honoria wrung her hands. "Oh, my God," she cried, "what have I done! I have not only lost the cross, but sent Ethne Ni Brien to her death! Lord Iveagh, I pray, I implore you, seek and save her!"

But a sudden thought sprang to my mind. Ethne Ni Brien, Ethne of the hearts, as her admirers called her, was niece to a gentleman, Manus O'Brien, who lived on the Clare side of the Shannon, a suspected Williamite. It was possible that the girl's offer was not as disinterested as it appeared. She might have a permit to pass between the camps; she might be in the pay of the foe. My training in France had taught me that women of birth were often active agents in political intrigues. But I remembered that no woman of Ethne's class would dare enter the enemy's lines so late. The Prince of Orange, it was true, suppressed all license with a strong hand, but Kirke's and Douglass's troops formed part of the force before Limerick, and these men

had a sinister reputation. An inquiry at one of the outlets would let me know whether the girl had tried to pass the sentries. If I undertook the search at once I should be in time to join the expedition sent out that night. But as no time was to be lost I started to my feet.

"I will seek the lady and the cross," I said, and saw the pretty face before me brighten.

She held out both hands, thanking me effusively. Having kissed each in turn, I repeated my promise, bowed and left the room.

The group by the door had gone, and O'Kavanagh had disappeared. I hurried to the bridge that joins King's Island to the Munster shore. There I was challenged by the sentry, and giving the countersign, crossed, and was questioned again at the other end. Boisseleau (the only Frenchman who had stayed with us), Governor of the city, had strengthened the guards at all the bridges and gates, and had put the citizens under strict discipline. He was a brave and capable soldier and inspired trust. I was now in that part of Limerick known as Irishtown, where the defenses were stronger than those round the island, the fortress having a double wall, fire bastions and some towers.

As I went up Mungret Street I passed groups of men, anxious men and women. The departure of the French, who had carried off their stores and ammunition, had filled many with alarm. But others of a stouter heart had determined to hold the city to the last. These men had been cheered by Sarsfield's bold words; and I saw many stern and resolute faces among the crowd as I made my way to the gate.

On reaching St. John's I questioned the guard, but the men had been newly posted, and could tell me nothing of the girl. I therefore passed out and went towards the redoubt. After a brief greeting with the officer in command I looked over the parapet. As yet the enemy had not opened any trenches, the soldiers having been employed that day in cutting down wood to make fascines. The moon rising in an unclouded sky lit up the scene. I could see that the hedge rows and orchards that covered the foreground were still untouched by the ax. A neck of land ran between the redoubt and the English camp, bordered on both sides by a bog. The house the girl had gone to visit, or rather its ruins, stood in an orchard in this pass, surrounded by a wall. The enemy lay some distance back, their lines

stretching from where the river forked to Ireton's Fort. Thirty-eight thousand men I knew had sat down before the city ; and the rows of their tents, the lights of their fires, gleamed white and red, distinct and threatening in the summer night. To oppose this force we had 20,000 ill-armed infantry and 3,500 horse. Our king had deserted us, our swords were given to a lost cause, yet we stood at bay beneath the walls of Limerick, with our eyes turned to Sarsfield, the idol of our hearts.

As I looked I saw that a lane led from the redoubt to the orchard. Further down a hedge row threw a shade on the path ; and I knew that if Ethne Ni Brien had gone to the ruins she must have followed this road. I glanced at the glaciais, and determined to get into the lane. At the same moment I heard a footstep at my side, and looked round to see Purcell.

"A fine night, my Lord Iveagh," he said in that thin, mocking voice which seemed natural to the man. "We rats at bay will presently be driven in by the dogs of war yonder."

I threw a glance at the gunners, but the men lay on the ground by their guns and did not appear to have heard his words.

"Are you in command of this battery, Captain Purcell?" I asked.

"I shall be in an hour's time, when Captain MacMahon returns to the city," he said suavely.

"Then I should advise you to keep a bolder front before your men," I remarked. "We want officers who believe in our victory."

I spoke thus on purpose; Purcell had hated me since I had been given command of a post in Connacht, which he had all but lost to the enemy. He was about to make terms when I showed him Sarsfield's order and took charge of the garrison. Since that hour he had been my foe. There was another matter, too, that I remembered, in which I could swear his hand had appeared.

But he did not respond to the spur; instead he showed an infernal meekness of spirit. "You are right," he said mildly, "we officers must encourage the forlorn hope. But, pardon me, my lord, down the glacis is not the nearest way to the city."

I had crossed the parapet, and was on the slope to the ditch. His change of tone sent my eyes to his face. I saw that he believed that I was about to desert. Holding by the parapet, I called to MacMahon, who came forward at once.

"I intend to reconnoitre," I said, "and shall be back in an hour."

"You run some risk, Iveagh," he answered, with a slight note of surprise; "the enemy's patrols are not fifty yards off."

"Captain Iveagh is reckless of life." Purcell's voice sank, but I was sure I caught the word "honor." "We shall not be able to dissuade him from his enterprise."

It was not the time to ask him to repeat his words, so, telling MacMahon I thought the danger less than he represented, I swung myself down the slope to the ditch. Shaking my sword loose in the scabbard, I ran towards the lane, aware that both men watched my movements. There was a fragrance of flowers and ripening fruit around me as I went down the lane. The yellow moon hung like a golden shield against the dark blue wall of the sky behind the enemy's camp. I could hear the murmur from the latter rising in broken sounds in the still, warm air and mingling with the steady song of the great river.

Keeping in the shadow of the hedge, I got to the orchard unnoticed by the enemy's pickets. I entered by a breach in the wall, and paused under a tree to reconnoitre before advancing to the

house. Across the orchard I heard the tramp of feet moving up the lane by the English camp. The wall and thick foliage hid the men from my view, and after a brief halt I went forward, moving from tree to tree. Their shadows made a garlanded latticework on the silvered grass; the crooked trunks of the trees sent out long, dark, twisted lines, like the forms of many bent and worn old men. Suddenly, where the shadow weavings were closest, I saw the body of a man at my feet. His face was in shade, but one hand lay in the light, the fingers, curled inward, making a well for the moonbeams. The uniform, a red coat with green breeches and white stockings, told me that he had belonged to Kirke's Regiment of Foot. There was a recent wound in his side; a long scar crossed the cheek and nose; his eyes still held the wrath with which he had met death.

I avoided the pool of blood by his side, and, going towards the open ground, again heard voices and the ring of arms behind the wall. The house stood in the centre of a small lawn, its blackened gables rising in sharp outlines against the gleaming sky. The door had gone and the hall was strewn with masonry and half-burnt timber, debris from the roof. I moved slowly among the

wreckage till I reached the entrance to the room where the cross had been left. The upper part of this chamber was flooded by a white wave of moonbeams that came through great gaps in the roof. I could see as I crossed the threshold the recess by the window. For a moment I looked round the dismantled room, but no figure lurked in the shadows; Ethne Ni Brien was not there. Making my way across stones and timber I reached the recess, put in my hand and felt the cold touch of metal. Seizing the box, I brought it into the moonlight and opened it swiftly, only to find that it was empty. On this discovery I concluded that the girl had carried out her dangerous task and had found the cross. I felt relieved at the idea and glad also that she had proved true to her friend. For a minute her presence seemed to fill the room, as if some essence of her individuality had been left behind. So influenced was I for a second or two by the fancy that I found myself apologizing to that vague, spiritual impression, complimenting it on its rash courage. Then, with a smile at my own folly, I went out of the room.

Hearing the voices once more as I reached the doorway, I measured with my eye the open space

of ground that lay between the house and the apple-trees growing by the wall near the Dutch camp. It was less than that on the city side, but I knew that my figure showed black and red and glittering as I left the threshold and approached the trees. A bird stirred in a branch as I got into shelter, and a second later an owl fled with a shriek towards the river. I had just time to draw back behind a trunk laden with gray moss when a man's head appeared above the wall. His face rose red and expectant over a clump of ivy that topped the stones.

"Come out!" he cried; "come out, ye toad!"

The next instant he was pulled down, and a laugh followed. Freeing my sword from the scabbard, I went forward. The ground by the wall was soft and mossy, the trees growing close together, hanging fruit-laden branches into the lane. Standing on an old stump fringed with brown toadstools, I looked over and saw two men of Kirke's regiment sitting by the bank eating apples, their snaphances lying by their sides. One was jeering his fellow for being afraid of an owl.

"Afeard!" I heard the other answer. "I tell ye, comrade, I'm afeard of nought. But that bird

screeched like the French traitor in Callimot's foot who was broke on the wheel for plotting for King James."

"That's somewhat for a sodger to be punished for," was the reply. "But, hang me, this new King of ours strings us up if we take a beeve or sheep too much, or squint at a lass."

The man who had peered over the wall flung the core of his apple away.

"There it comes again!" he cried, starting to his feet as the owl swept back through the trees with a sharp, prolonged cry. "That a bird! Nay, that's — Good Lord! why were we posted here!"

His comrade broke into a loud laugh, and the man, as if half ashamed of his fear, sank back on the ground. He had a round dark face, with square, protruding chin, and broken teeth. His terror struck me as strange; he had the bulldog look of a fighter.

Just at that moment I heard the tramp of approaching feet. The two men recovered their arms and rose, and he of the owl challenged with a loud, rasping voice. The newcomers gave the countersign, and came up at a rapid pace. They were a party of four men, all smart in new coats

and breeches, with a flash of brass here and there; but my eyes were at once drawn to the cloaked figure of a woman whom they led. The man who had challenged took a step forward.

"What baggage have you got?" he asked.

The sergeant left the patrol at a stride. "Hearken, ye men," he said, a mingling of suavity and command in his tone; "this woman is my prize. I caught her anon by the edge of yonder bog. I will see to your promotion, Hinks, and speak a word to the captain for you, Woodhouse, if ye hold her in charge till I come."

I saw the men grin in the moonlight; their broad smiles made the Sergeant turn upon them with a threatening air.

"Ye'd best do what I tell ye," he said, with an oath; then changed his truculent air. "We have each our chances in war, lads; my turn to-day, like enough yours to-morrow. Guard the wench—for, damn me, the captain must not see her, now that King William frowns upon a soldier's pastime."

"We promise ye, Sergeant, we promise," answered the two men. "Strap us up if we even take a squint at the wench."

"She is gagged to stop her squalls," returned

the Sergeant. "So all ye've got to do is to see that she does not run off," and giving an order to his party, he marched away.

It was evident that the ruffians had found and captured Ethne Ni Brien on her way back to the city. For a second I watched the retreating form of the patrol, my hand tightening on my hilt. Then the soldiers laughed, and I saw Hinks—he of the owl—grasp the girl's shoulder.

"I feel her bones," he jeered. "What prize has the Sergeant here! Ho, my Irish lass, have you been in a siege?"

The figure shook itself free, but made no reply. "She can only speak her heathen tongue," remarked his comrade.

"Nay, she's gagged! But, strap me up if I don't see what she is like!"

A moan broke from the girl. I waited no longer. Seizing a branch, I swung myself on to the wall, and leaped to the ground. The two men sprang back, and I rushed upon them. One thrust, and the soldier named Woodhouse fell, while the man Hinks, with a yell of fear, turned and fled down the lane.

I ran to the girl to cut her bonds, but found her wrists were free. She passed me swiftly, running

up the lane, and in a moment I was following in her rear. I believed we might escape if we reached the corner of the orchard before the alarm was given. The terrified look in Hinks's eyes, a look that had wiped all manhood from them, told me that the soldier had taken my sudden appearance in the lane for a supernatural visitation. Some moments would elapse before his shaken nerves allowed him to grasp the truth.

On getting round the angle of the wall, the girl ran down a narrow zigzag path and suddenly stopped under a hawthorn-tree. I joined her at once, but found that her red hood hid her face. I deemed it time to speak.

"We must not linger here," I exclaimed. "By now you know how rash your enterprise has been. Kirke's Lambs are devils!"

The green haws stirred as she moved her head, but she made no reply, and I was conscious the next second that my age did not warrant me to take her to task. Moreover, I was anxious to see her face. "Bean-uasal, I hope you found the cross," I said. "I admire your courage and devotion." Then as the silence continued, I remembered that she was gagged, and felt shocked to think I had not recalled that fact before.

"A thousand pardons," I exclaimed, and, turning swiftly towards her, was about to raise her hood and remove the gag, when a pair of withered arms were uplifted, the hood was thrown back and I met the gaze of an old woman. A mass of faded hair, the color of the bent grass around, showed over the wrinkled forehead, the eyes were bright blue and full of power. I drew back, astonished at the unexpected sight.

"Do not stand here," she said hoarsely. "Ora! are you a fool! Follow me! They are coming."

"But the lady, the girl," I answered, puzzled by the presence of the woman. "I must find her."

"Tigearna (lord), follow me," she repeated, a ring of insistence in her tone. "And come with the heels of speed if you would ride out a free man to-night."

"Old woman, I must find Ethne Ni Brien," I said doggedly, and turned my face up the lane.

She caught my arm. "A shroud on thee, my son! A strong fool like many of your race! Ethne Ni Brien is in the city. Come!"

I looked into her bright eyes for a moment, and then obeyed, knowing that I had seen this woman before.

CHAPTER II

WE ran swiftly along the path, which led over a field bordered on the left by a bog. The grass presently gave way to the gray, lance-like rushes with their pale bannerets of flowers and the carpet of the red-leaved sundew. Further on the naked bog stuff made great black spaces between the clumps of heather and bog myrtle, and over these, hardened by the fine weather, the woman passed without making a mark on the ground. But my great jack-boots sank into the peat, leaving a trail behind them. I looked back at the sound of voices in our rear, and saw the gleam of arms above the hedge that bordered the field. I knew that the white light that suffused the bog would enable the pickets to see our figures the moment the soldiers emerged from the lane. Almost at the same instant I discovered that our advance was barred by a pool of black water, which lay ten or twelve feet below the ground on which we stood. My guide appeared in no way put out by this obstacle, and, turning, ran along the edge of

the bank for some yards. Presently she reached a spot where the water was dammed in by a second bank, some feet lower than the one we had followed. Springing upon this, she hastened to a hut that stood a little distance off against a bank, and, beckoning to me, disappeared.

In a few minutes I was in the hovel and found her standing before a turf-stack that was built on one side. Some embers smoldered on the hearth, and the moonlight that came through the entrance cut the darkness in two like a shining sword. The hut, sheltered by the bank, was hidden from the view of those in the field. The soldiers, I knew, dared not advance much further, as they would be seen and fired upon from the fort. The woman began to take the turf from the heap and built a wall with the sods before the doorway. Inch by inch she cut off the light till the darkness in the hut was complete, except for a red flicker among the ashes on the hearth. Her acts appeared purposeless ; then my thoughts reverted to the Sergeant's mistake.

The man must have looked at his prey. He had told his comrades, moreover, that he had gagged her mouth. Unless some sidhe of the rath or lake had played a trick upon him, I could not

guess how the mistake had arisen. My attention was again presently drawn to my companion. And, my eyes becoming accustomed to the darkness, the moonlight filtering through the crevices in the mud walls enabled me to make out her figure as she crouched on the floor. She had clasped her arms round her knees and was swaying her body to and fro.

“Ochon mo chroidhe! Ochon!” she groaned. “There is blackness on the night and blackness on the day. With blood the sun has set in the ocean and the wolves have come down from the mountains. The brave men stand on the walls of Luimneach and their faces are towards the strangers. My grief! I see these troubles! I, Mor, daughter of Donnead, son of Art. The power and gift was given to me—in Uladh it was given. I have met those on the rath who touched my eyes so that I can see the sorrowful sights—the griefs of the world. Ochon! The tears run down my face to-night for Erin and for the blood of her brave sons. Ochon! Ochon!”

Afraid that the dismal croaking might reach our pursuers’ ears, I bade her be silent. “Sean-bean (old woman), you should bid us have heart, not foretell our ruin,” I said.

She fell silent, and I judged it time to leave the hut. "I have been on a fool's errand," I said aloud, and groped my way towards the door.

I laid a hand on the wall of sods and heard a rustle of garments. At the same moment the woman approached and stood by my side. She spoke in a low and muffled voice, as if she had drawn the hood across her lips. "There is a wish on me, Niall MacGuinness of Iveagh, to go with you to the city," she said.

I told her she might come, and she continued, her tone sinking to a whisper: "You must take me past the guards, young man of Uladh, lest they hold me as the Sassenaghs did."

"Our men, sean-bean," I answered, "will not take you for younger than you are."

"MacGuinness of Iveagh" (the woman's voice grew suddenly treble), "my thanks upon you for being a warranty for their eyes."

The sods fell noiselessly outward under my hand as she spoke, a brown cascade of turf, and the gleaming night leaped in, crowned and starry. I stepped out and, approaching the bank, paused to scan the scene. The bog lay in softened lines, veined in a faint haze, to the field. The white bog cotton spread over the surface like silver em-

broidery on a dark mantle, the scent of the myrtle filled the air. A shimmering fairy light hung over the black patches of mold and the knotted clumps of heather. The deep pool, still and suggestive of death, lay black under the shadow of the brown bank, but white by the soft flat bog that bound the outer edge, holding the vague face of the reflected moon. In the distance I saw the lights of Limerick, and to the east those of the enemy's camp. A faint sheeny veil of vapor had gathered by the hedge, floating up from the bog and the note of a corn-crake came from the field. The picket was not in sight, and I looked back to see if the woman were near. I found her standing behind me, with her hood drawn over her face. I saw that she had shoes on her feet.

"You have put on brogues," I remarked. She bent forward till her cloak hid her feet. "Why not," she said, "since I visit the city?"

I climbed on the bank and turned to help her. She drew back with an air that seemed surprised, if not contemptuous. "I am not your seam-matair (grandmother)," she piped, and waved me on.

Finding that she scorned my help, I turned away. At the end of the field we heard a distant burst of song; it came from the enemy's camp.

The woman hastened up to my side and I saw her tremble. Knowing that we ought not to linger, I took her hand and we crossed the field at a rapid pace. Suddenly it struck me that the palm I held was soft and plump. On reaching the hedge I drew up and the hand was withdrawn. "Mor," I said, "there is danger still. One of your age and infirmities will run faster if you hold my hand."

The figure doubled up. It coughed. "Mor is my name; Mor, who sees into the future," the voice piped.

"Then, take my hand, woman that reads destiny," I returned and tried to recover the palm.

"Great is the honor you would do me," she quavered, "but your hand is not for me," and she turned away.

I looked at the cloaked figure, giving it a closer survey before I walked on. Glancing back after a time I found that she was following closely in my rear. Her stooping shoulders, the shortened breath, the halting gait, were those of an old woman. Old age seemed to have suddenly struck her, for she had gone fast enough up the lane and over the bog. A minute later I heard firing in front, and drew up once more. Some figures

flitted by on the other side of the hedge, and with oaths hurried down the path. They were the Sergeant's party returning to their post, followed by a few shots from the redoubt. A deep groan brought my eyes upon Mor.

"You need not be afraid, sean-bean," I said.

"It is pains in my bones," she replied; "pains, young man, not fear of capture, that brings that moan to my lips."

I scanned the hood with sympathetic eyes. "This affliction has come upon you suddenly, I am afraid, good Mor."

She coughed for some seconds, and from the curve of her elbow under her cloak I knew she had put her hand to her side.

"Tell me," she said, when she had recovered, "what took you out on a fool's errand?"

"I went to find Ethne Ni Brien," I replied, looking towards the city, "and I was a fool, for the girl is in Limerick and I wish to be with Sarsfield to-night."

"Ora! the feet of the young draw to the young! And this maid of your heart?"

My eyes turned to the hood. "Maid of my heart! I have never seen the jade! Ah, your vision fails. She may be Ethne of the hearts to

young O'Carroll and O'Kavanagh and to a score of others, but she is Ethne of the wiles to me."

"You are wise, straight young man of the sword! You name her right. But your wisdom went further than avoiding her eyes. You sought something else!"

We walked on as she spoke; I remembered that I had mentioned the cross. "What else?" I asked.

"I will answer you when you answer me. Who sent you to seek Ethne Ni Brien?"

"Mor," I answered lightly, "I believe no longer that you met the sidhe on the rath, else you would not need to ask."

"Look! but you have little sense! I asked to see if you would betray your trust. It was Sarsfield's wife who sent you."

I made no reply and hastened on. Mor followed somewhat faster than one who had fallen lame should have done. We were challenged from the redoubt as soon as our figures were discerned and, giving the countersign, I advanced. The soldiers, standing to their arms, were grouped by the parapet, the moonlight whitening their weapons, the steel on Purcell's breast gleaming bright as a mirror. Mor glided past me, and

drew near the ditch as if anxious to pass unnoticed.

"Halt!" Purcell cried, seeing her intention. "Seize the spy!" he shouted to the men.

Two of the soldiers leaped over the barrier and Mor came back to me at a pace that showed she was cured of her halt for the moment.

I ordered the men not to touch her. "Captain Purcell," I said, "this woman accompanies me to the city!"

The soldiers paused and looked at Purcell. He eyed me for a few seconds. "Is she young?" he said, with a thin smile.

"As young as Galloping Hogan's grandmother," I replied. "All Limerick knows the calliagh (old hag)."

The smile lingered on his lips. "I will take your word, my lord," he said. "Mor Ni Cahane may pass."

The woman turned her hooded head towards the redoubt. "May heaven be your bed!" she quavered. "It is a noble gentleman you are."

I was about to walk on when Purcell again addressed me. "My lord," he said, suavely, "what report have you to make?"

I stopped and looked up at the parapet. As I

had said that I had left the redoubt to reconnoitre I knew that it was his duty to put the question and mine to answer. I therefore told him in an official tone that I had had an encounter with two men and had injured or killed one. He replied in the same tone that I had been rash to leave the redoubt. Taking no notice of his remark, I passed on. Mor had already gone ahead, and I saw that she had fallen lame again. Hastening to the covered way under the wall I beckoned to her to mend her pace, and then knocked at the sally-port. After a brief delay we were admitted and went up the lane, Mor hobbling by my side.

"Niall MacGuinness, Lord of Iveagh," she gasped, "it is on my mind that you have a double tongue. You told one thing to me and another to him at the redoubt."

The narrow street was in shadow; a deep archway stood on the right a few yards off, and not a soul was near. I stopped. "Why have I a double tongue?" I demanded.

"Because to me you said that you sought a maid, and to Captain Purcell that you went beyond the redoubt to reconnoitre. And so I doubt your truth, for you said nothing of the duty, but much scorn of the maid."

"Old woman," I answered, "you asked about the maid, not about my duty."

"Young man, it is by evasions that souls reach perdition.

"Mor," I returned, "we men more often get there by the lids of a woman's eyes."

I placed my hand upon her hood, determined to see her face. But darting from my side, she reached the arch, and a young, merry laugh broke from her lips as she stood poised for flight.

"Now let me bless you even as your grandmother might, or, Mor, friend of the sidhe!" she cried in French. "I, jade and will-o'-wisp and light-of-love, call down the raillery of all women on your head. A fool's errand! Yes, a fool's errand, monsieur."

Another peal of laughter followed, a pair of white hands threw back the hood, and for a second I saw a mocking girl's face before its owner turned and fled into the darkness of the archway. I followed, but not for long. A number of houses blocked the outlet beyond the arch, and I saw her disappear into one. Seeing the folly of pursuit, aware also that I had no time to spend in chasing this will-o'-the-wisp maid, I returned to the lane and made my way to Ball's Bridge. I

believed that she had found the cross and with Mor's aid had hidden it when the pair had tricked the Sergeant. As I went up Great Street I determined to see Lady Honoria and assure her that the jewel was safe. When near her house I heard my name called, and O'Kavanagh rode by. For a moment he tightened rein.

"Get to horse!" he cried. "The squadrons have formed! Meet me at the castle!"

He galloped on, and I ran into the house. The hall was deserted, and I went up the stairs to the door of the room where I had had my previous interview. Having knocked, Lady Honoria's voice bade me enter.

"I hoped you would come," she exclaimed, rising to her feet. "I prayed for you for I feared you might be killed. What tidings do you bring?"

"Good ones, I think," I replied quickly. "Ethne Ni Brien is in the city and has, I believe, the cross."

Her face lit up with joy. She began to question me, but I told her that I was going on duty and had not a moment to spare. At this she looked annoyed, but I thought of the ride, begged her to pardon me, kissed her hand and fled from

the room. In ten minutes I was at the castle, and found that O'Kavanagh had sent for my horse.

I had not two minutes to wait before it arrived, and, springing into the saddle, I looked around. Five men of Sarsfield's horse were drawn up before the gate, their red coats looking black, their breastplates dull in the shadow of the tower. A sense of anticipation seemed to rest upon us all. The pawing of the horses, the ringing of steel, and the loud song of the wide-throated river made our silence impressive, like the tense pause that breaks some strenuous effort. In front lay Thomond Bridge, the open avenue from the city into Clare. By it Limerick communicated with all Connacht; by it our allies, the French, had retreated. M. Lauzun and my Lord Duke of Tyrconnell had ridden across it, leaving us to our fate. I thought again of the Frenchman's sneers, of Tyrconnell's gloomy forebodings, and I thanked heaven, who had given us a man, Sarsfield, our hero.

His horse and Fitzgerald's were held before the gate. Near by a man sat on a handsome bay, with a cloak slung over his shoulders. His breeches were made of untanned hide; his legs from ankle to knee were strapped with bands of

leather, and his daring eyes rolled round the scene. This scout was Mor's grandson, Galloping Hogan, light horseman and Rapparee.

Presently the castle gate opened, and a murky, yellow gleam shot across the pavement from a lantern hanging on the wall within the arch. Sarsfield walked by M. de Boisseleau's side and the Duke of Berwick came a pace in advance, Fitzgerald bringing up the rear. M. de Boisseleau, with knitted brows and grave eyes, was speaking.

"Upon the success of this ride, M. le General," he said in a grave tone, "depends the safety of the city. If the battering train of the enemy arrives before we have strengthened our defenses the Duke de Lauzun will have been a true prophet."

The half royal lad in front paused and shrugged his shoulders. He was not popular then with us, though fifteen years later we thought better of him in Spain. But he was jealous of Sarsfield, and we Irish resented that. He had fine flashing eyes, a gay indolence in his air, there was a cynicism in his smile. He owed the iron in his blood to Arabella Churchill, his mother.

"In my judgment," he remarked in French, and glanced at Sarsfield, "you will fail. The enemy

will be warned, yourself cut off, and should you return you will bring back honor, but no guns."

My gaze hung upon Sarsfield. The light lit up his figure showing his splendid carriage and great height. He wore a wide hat, with plumes, and the scarlet coat of the horse; the long lace lapels of his cravat hung on the steel on his breast. He turned his deep, blue, resolute eyes upon Berwick.

"M. le Duc," he answered, speaking in French, "the ride shall be a success, and I shall blow up the guns."

I saw the lad smile coldly. "It is well to be assured," he replied. "My father has not much reason to depend upon his Irish troops."

I felt my blood warm at the lie, but M. de Boisseleau at once answered the charge. "M. le Duc," he said gravely, "I myself testify that the Irish army—an army made up partly of raw levies, ill armed and deficient in guns—has nevertheless fought well for His Majesty. Without doubt, however, this ride is a very desperate venture."

Sarsfield put his foot in the stirrup and mounted. He gathered up the reins and saluted Boisseleau. "Monsieur," he said gallantly, "my

men shall capture the guns, so help me God and Mary!"

In a minute more we were trotting towards the bridge and the clatter of our horses' hoofs soon rang over the arches. On the other side of the river the order to gallop was given, and we swung up the road. Presently the camp broke into view, the white tents backed by a range of hills. In the silvered field to the right a body of horse was drawn up, the troopers standing to their horses. The pick of the cavalry had been paraded, detachments from Lutterel's and Clifford's regiments, from Lord Clare's, from Sarsfield's and the savage Lord Galmoy's, from Lord Dongon's and Sir Neal O'Neill's dragoons. All these men were well clothed and equipped, the total number of the force being 500 swords.

As our party rode into camp Sarsfield halted to speak to an officer, while Fitzgerald brought Galloping Hogan forward. There was a gay, audacious look on the scout's face as he trotted up and sat bareheaded before Sarsfield, who told him that the King would reward him if he guided the troops across the Shannon that night. The man replied that he would be a true guide, but desired no reward from Righ Scumas, "but the high

word of praise from you, Padraig Sarsfield, grandson of Rory O'More, will be reward enough for me," he added.

"See that you deserve it, then," answered Sarsfield. "But I allow no man here to speak ill of the King."

"A king who fled at the Boyne and fled to France," O'Kavanagh whispered to me. "A fine king for our swords!"

"It's Ireland's honor, not the King's, that we are upholding," I answered. And it was to that thought many of us held. Otherwise what hope had we? Royal James, with his own trembling hands, had flung his crown from his head, and from Louis's palace dared to slander our name and accuse us of desertion.

Now, to capture the convoy upon the destruction of which so much depended, we had to recross the Shannon. The guns were being brought up from Cashel under a small escort. The enemy held O'Brien's Bridge and had stationed a guard at Killaloe. But below Loch Derg was a ford unknown to the English, and Hogan's duty was to lead our detachment thither. The rumor that the guns were on their way had reached the camp, and the men knew that they were to ride forth to

capture them. They greeted Sarsfield with loud cheers as he passed down the line, his quick eye flashing from face to face. In a few minutes we were formed in column and received the order to march.

I was attached to the advance guard and had Hogan by my side. We rode northwest to avoid the enemy's pickets, halting in a village when two miles from the camp. This was in order to learn the position of the pickets, as Hogan had some reason to believe that they had been changed. An old man, whom we roused from his bed, told us they had occupied fresh posts, but knew nothing further. A young man, he said, a stranger from the North, had visited them earlier in the day. "He has gone," he added with chattering teeth. "He has gone to Cloona."

At the words Hogan knocked his heels against the sides of his horse, and with a shrill whistle pulled round and galloped back to the main body. What he said to Sarsfield I do not know, but he came back at a speed that struck sparks from his bay's hoofs.

"Niall MacGuinness of Iveagh!" he said to me, "Padraig Sarsfield orders you and five men to Cloona to seize the lad. I will show the way, and ride fast!"

I picked out my men swiftly, and we put spurs to our horses. Suddenly it flashed across me that Ethne's uncle, the suspected traitor, lived at Cloona, and I understood then the reason for haste. I forced my horse forward till I was abreast with Hogan, and we galloped side by side across the field. Presently we reached a gap in a hedge, and rode through in single file to a narrow lane that led to a gate set in an archway. One side of the avenue was shaded by trees, the other was open to a lake. I could see in the distance a large, gray house, whose pallid front showed out against the black background of a wood. Breaking open the gate, we galloped along the grass by the lake till within a few yards of the house, when, forming two parties, I sent one to the rear of the building. Then I rode up to the door and knocked.

Before long lights flitted past the windows, and presently one was opened and a man looked out. He had put on a wig, which hung awry, and held a pistol in his hand. The moonlight struck his face; it looked cold and well bred.

"Pray, sir, are you in command of these men whom I see on my lawn?" he asked in English, speaking the language with a roll of the "r's."

I replied that I was, and that I regretted having to arouse his household at so late an hour, but that I wished to speak to one of his servants. The clamor of dogs in the rear of the house rose to a tumult as I spoke, and I knew that Hogan had begun his search.

He eyed me in silence for a minute, then left the window. I sat still, keeping a watch on the door, which presently opened, and the gentleman came out. He had drawn on his stockings, and had flung a long cloak over his form. I saw that he was unarmed. He was a tall man; and a nearer approach showed me his pale blue eyes, wide, compressed lips, and long, thin neck.

"The hour is late, my Lord Iveagh," he said, courteously, "but if you will dismount while your men complete their search, I can offer you a fair cup of wine."

I wondered how he knew my name as I thanked him and declined to leave my saddle.

"These are troublesome times," he continued. "King James in France and the Orange William in the land, and many thieves and cutthroats abroad. I can scarce ride a mile from my own door without an armed escort. Everywhere Rap-

parees and robbers wait to cut down honest men. It is a surprise to me, my Lord Iveagh, that you ride with so small a guard."

I said that I was well armed and had no fear of the Rapparees, who were friends to our cause. He replied, changing his tone, that he spoke more from report than personal experience, as, indeed, he had received some civility from one or two of the men. He then asked me about friends in the city. "There is Captain Purcell," he said; "a good soldier and pleasant companion. Many a ringing chase we have followed over the Clare hills together. I would the times allowed us to meet again among the ferns and gorse to the music of the huntsman's horn."

The mention of Purcell's name gave me a clew as to how he had obtained mine. Purcell and I were not yet open foes, though I hoped that it would not be long before our swords crossed. I answered that the officer he mentioned was no friend of mine, and turning to one of my men bade him seek Hogan and help in the search. On hearing this command, Mr. O'Brien at once offered to summon his servants for my inspection, speaking with great civility; but I refused, answering, too, with courtesy; for I knew that

Hogan would be a sleuth-hound on the lad's trail, and I was not sure that the gentleman's intentions were honest. Standing in his stockinged feet, his periwig hanging over one ear, his long, thin shanks showing under the wide cloak, he did not look a very dignified person, yet his manner showed ease and breeding, and he had submitted without temper to the search. In the pause that followed my refusal of his offer, I began to think of his niece. During the ride to his house I had thought of her more than once. I wondered whether her friendship with Sarsfield's wife was a source of danger to the city.

"My Lord," Mr. O'Brien said with sudden gravity, and I saw his face lengthen in the moonlight, "Captain Purcell—whom I regret you do not rank among your friends—is not the only person who claims my interest in the city. My niece, Mistress Ethne Ni Brien, a young maid of nineteen, is there. For five days I have had no tidings of her, and now the city is besieged and I know not what danger may befall one endeared to me by the tie of blood and her own charms. It may be that you have met her at the house of the Lady Honoria Sarsfield, whose friendship she has obtained."

The speech filled me with suspicion. I was impatient to be gone. It seemed that the gaunt figure, shifting now and again the flat feet on the gravel, would probe the secret of our ride. Ethne had obtained the friendship of Sarsfield's wife; that fair and charming lady, so young herself, would be as wax in the girl's hands. The question had been put to sound me. I replied carelessly that I had come from Connacht, and regretted that I could give him no tidings of his niece. Then, with an inward curse at Hogan's delay, I wheeled my horse to avoid further questions and rode down to the edge of the lake. For the sake of appearance I allowed the animal to drink, and, sitting still in the saddle, looked across the smooth dark surface of the water. The moon rode high in the sky among a few thin clouds, making a long white path along the lough. It might have been the track of the piast, the magic snake, from one reedy bank to another. My mind played with this fancy for a moment, recalling the tales told of these dragons, one of which lies curled in the bottom of each deep lough. Then, pulling my chestnut's nose from the water as I recalled the work before him, I turned and trotted up the lawn. I found


O'Brien standing where I had left him, his gaze on me.

"I marvel, my Lord," he said, approaching my stirrup as I halted; "I marvel that a soldier like you, one who has been trained, as I hear, in France, should run the risk of giving water to your charger when no doubt he has some distance to ride."

I was spared the trouble of a reply by seeing Hogan and the men emerge from the other side of the lawn. He carried a youth on his crupper whose face I noted in the moonlight. He had crooked eyes, and long, dark hair, and cried out when he saw his master.

"I cannot help you, Cecil," O'Brien told him. "This gentleman will see that you suffer no hurt. Be faithful and obey those who are in command of this party."

I gave the order to start, and, raising my hat, we rode away. Once or twice I looked back, but O'Brien's figure was no longer to be seen. When clear of the avenue we put spurs to our horses and soon rejoined the main body. The boy Cecil was led before Sarsfield, who promised him gold and his protection if he told him the position of the pickets.




He at once gave the desired information, and his report made the General change our route. We rode north for some miles, then wheeled and headed for the river.

In an hour's time the roar of the falls came up the slope to our ears, and the black water, glistening like ice as it slid over the rocks, sprang into view, gathering and carrying forward the foam, swirling and breaking again into tumult. The smell of hay was in the air as we crept down the meadows behind Killaloe, and the soft breath of the August night was full of the odors of meadow-sweet and fragrant herbs from the hedgerows. The moon sent an oblique white track up the river, piercing the entrance to Lough Derg like a gleaming spear. The long range of mountains in the distance stood in dark lines against the starry sky. Deep in their fastnesses the column was to shelter.

On reaching the ford Hogan entered the river, and the advance guard followed. On the opposite bank we halted, and I looked back. The rush of the water muffled the sound of the splashing hoofs, and the men came on two abreast, the intervals of the squadrons forming links in the chain of the long black line of horsemen who carried

the fate of Limerick on their swords. Beyond the silvery rings circling from the hoofs I saw the pointed head of O'Kavanagh's wolf-hound cleaving the water as the animal swam to shore. Not a patrol of the enemy's was in sight; not a scout on the hills; as far as we could tell the country lay open to the Keeper range.

Presently we received the order to advance, and followed Hogan down a road at a smart pace. After going like this for some time, we halted suddenly near a bridge, as a body of men sprang out of the darkness and appeared to dispute our way. But they proved to be our friends, a party of Rapparees, who, on recognizing that we were Irish cavalry, held their pikes at salute, and with friendly greetings we passed on. Our route lay over undulating fields for a time, then dipped into heather-clad bogs, from which the track rose as we drew near the mountains. Having crossed a steep ridge, we rode into a gorge between the hills, and wading through a mountain stream began the ascent. The moon was setting as our horses went up the steep slope with stretched necks and panting sides. To the south the stars were blotted out by the cone that towered above our heads. Far across the misty plain the fringe



of the Shannon glimmered, while other mountain ranges stood out to the northwest as walls against the sky.

After an hour's ride we crossed a shoulder of the Keeper, and rode down into a deep wooded ravine, where we were to lie for the night and part of the following day, in order to spring upon the convoy as it crossed the plain. The men broke off, sentries were posted, and the horses fed and tethered. I flung myself by a rock close to the stream, where I was joined presently by O'Kavanagh. Our friendship had begun in France, where our fathers were in exile. He had a gay and gallant bearing, but I had seen him in other moods, moods that made me wonder how much of the real man I knew. As a rule he was as gentle as a woman, generous and bright tempered. We ate in silence for a few minutes while the brook babbled at our feet.

CHAPTER III

"MY God!" he said suddenly, "when this war is over I will marry Ethne og, return to my forefathers' lands in Carlow, and hunt the wolf and the deer with Bran, my prince of hounds."

I leaned back against the rock and felt for tobacco in my belt. The tone showed me that O'Kavanagh had revealed a long cherished dream. "Has Ethne og agreed?" I drawled.

"Not yet, but she shall. I shall sweep every rival from my path."

"If you fall in this expedition, may I become your heir?" I asked jestingly.

"I shall not fall. But if I fall I shall return and woo her in the mist and the wind and bring her to my white home. No! you shall not have Ethne, Iveagh; you would not drink to her health."

A step crushed the ferns above us, and Fitzgerald slid down over the bank. "No man is to smoke!" he cried, as I struck a spark from my flint. "Sarsfield fears that the men may set fire

to the heather. There will be light enough soon for dice; the stars are waning."

"Where is the General?" I asked.

"He is on the hillside, questioning a peasant about the supplies for to-morrow, and dismissed me on hearing me yawn. By my faith! a considerate commander." Fitzgerald seated himself on the rock and began to sing a lullaby.

"Is seo, mo leanav, is seo, mo leanav, is seo!"

"That is how my foster mother closed my eyes in the days of my infancy. Ah, happy days!" he added in a mock serious tone. "O'Kavanagh, your brute is howling! What the devil does the dog mean by chorusing my lullaby?"

The hound had raised its head suddenly and had sent a long dismal cry into the night. It faced Fitzgerald. I looked up at him as he sat swinging his legs on the rock and saw in the gloom his laughing eyes fixed upon the dog. O'Kavanagh laid his hand on the animal's neck, and after another deep howl it crouched at his feet, with its head resting on its paws.

"The men would have been on their knees in another minute," continued Fitzgerald. "Each howl came straight from the churchyard. Iveagh, I heard some news before I left the city, but I must

bind you and O'Kavanagh to keep it secret if you would hear it."

"Is it of importance?" I asked.

"Decidedly, *mon ami*, but it is not to be talked of."

We gave our word and the aid-de-camp lowered his voice. "O'Donnell's cross has gone," he said impressively, "and it has been stolen."

O'Kavanagh sat up suddenly, but the loss of the cross being already known to me, I felt and showed no surprise.

"Great God!" said O'Kavanagh, "does Lady Honoria know? I thought the cross was in her charge."

"It is that fact that makes the theft so serious," replied Fitzgerald. "I do not think she knows yet of the loss. O'Donnell's anger will be great. Can you guess the thief, Iveagh?"

I did not answer at once. I wondered whether I might tell the two men of my adventure, since they now knew so much. But I remembered my promise to Lady Honoria and kept silent.

"Is he known?" I asked with some eagerness.

"Not the name, but it is said to be one of the gentlemen who were present when the wager was made."

I fell silent, my thoughts leaped back to that scene. An incident had happened then that, viewed with the report now afloat, looked as if a plot had been laid for my dishonor. The infamy of it made me hot.

"You may be sure," I exclaimed, "that Purcell is the source of this report. I know him to be a coward, and ready to strike a foe in the back."

Fitzgerald's handsome head nodded. "A true estimate of the man," he said. "But both Berwick and Boisseleau think well of him. You do not believe the cross has been stolen?"

"No! Remember the house in which the wager was made has been burned; remember how sudden was the advance of the enemy's van."

"I agree with Iveagh," said O'Kavanagh suddenly. "I do so for two reasons. First, Iveagh studied logic when I was learning from Maitre Othon to fence; secondly, I hate Purcell, who has sneered at my Ethne."

"Your Ethne!" exclaimed Fitzgerald, a note of mock surprise in his tone. "A shroud upon you! but your conceit is great! Sweet Ethne belongs to no man!"

"She belongs to me," said O'Kavanagh doggedly, "as every rival shall learn."

Fitzgerald laughed. "You are moonstruck!" he exclaimed. "Look, a star falls!" He pointed to the sky where a meteor shot across the dark blue of the night. "Behold thyself! Lucifer, son of the morning! Such shall be your fate!"

"Another star follows!" O'Kavanagh cried.

"And another," I added. "They are baleful omens."

Our vocies brought some of the officers who were higher up the slope down to us. They broke upon the scene with laughter and jokes. We felt gay and confident of success. In the midst of our mirth Sarsfield drew near, as he followed the bank of the stream. We all sprang to our feet, our hands raised in salute.

"Gentlemen," his voice had a brave ringing note. "The Keeper watches us to-night," he pointed to the dark outline of the mountain cone. "Rest, gentlemen, for we shall not sleep to-morrow night."

"Unless, General, some of us sleep in death," laughed Fitzgerald.

"A brave sleep," said Sarsfield, "if it follows duty well done."

We would have cheered, but he repressed us. "It is not well to raise the echoes of the moun-

tain," he remarked, laughing, and went on towards where the men were encamped.

Some of us flung ourselves on our backs after he was gone. But I could not sleep. I lay looking up into the infinite deep over my head, thinking of the incidents of the night, and watched the stars pale in the creeping dawn. Day climbed the sky and the mountain cone brightened to a vivid green against the gleaming east. Then from the slopes and the ravine came the voices of the sergeants waking the men. No bugle rang; our lads sprang to their feet, eager for the work before them.

We were kept in the valley till noon, petted, fed, admired by the crowd of country people who came and laid their gifts of food and drink at our feet. Old men blessed us, their sons asked that they might be given arms, the mothers and daughters prayed for our success. All knew the peril of our position, cut off from the city, with the wide Shannon between us and our friends. Scouts came in every hour, bringing news of the approach of the convoy, and at midday Sarsfield, accompanied by Fitzgerald, several staff officers, O'Kavanagh and myself, climbed to a ridge that commanded a view of the plain. We younger

men flung ourselves on the grass and watched, using our field-glasses, while the General and the officer next in command ascended to a higher crest.

A soft wind carried gray clouds that hid the sun now and then and changed the emerald green of the fields to a darker hue. The bubble of a spring came in merry notes to our ears as we waited with eyes and souls on the plain. O'Kavanagh lay by my side, his elbows on the ground, his face framed in his hands. By his arm Bran crouched, holding his fine head erect. Fitzgerald moved restlessly, dropping oaths in French and Irish as some shadows played him false. The constant tingling of the spurs on his restive feet made a note with the skylark's song as every now and again a bird soared from the heather. Then suddenly, as if at a command, the head of the convoy crept out between the southern ranges, and in a moment we were spellbound, our glasses on the plain.

The black line lengthened out like slowly spun yarn. Points of light flashed off the procession from the guards' arms as the sun's rays struck the weapons. It stretched, it grew under our staring eyes till the whole convoy lay trailed along the

plain. A troop of dragoons rode first, followed by a party of musketeers, who marched by the wagons. Next to these came the guns, six twenty-four pounders, two eighteen-pounders, and five mortars. Five hundred draught horses were led behind, a second troop of dragoons bringing up the rear. The wagons we knew contained ammunition, casks of biscuits for the army, and the tin boats to bridge the Shannon. But for us the principal point of interest was the battering train.

We breathed hard. "I'd sell my soul for their watchword!" Fitzgerald gasped. "Ah, by God and Mary! the guard fears no ambush! Look how those dragoons ride without scouts or flankers! Oh, if Sarsfield would let us on them now!"

The wolf-hound sprang to his feet with a howl. O'Kavanagh dropped his glass and seized the dog by the collar. "What, Bran! what is it? That caileach (hag) yonder?" he asked.

I looked round and saw Mor approaching. Her red hood hung on her shoulders; her bleached hair was uncovered; the eyes looked no longer bright and piercing. The sight of the woman recalled my thoughts to Ethne, and I wondered if,

engaged in some mad prank, she were near. Then I glanced at Hogan, who lay further down the slope gazing like a vulture on the plain, and forgot the girl.

"Old Mor has come to bless us," said O'Kavanagh gayly, but Fitzgerald and the others were too absorbed in watching the progress of the convoy to look back. A minute later the death cavine rang out in the bright light of the early day, and our heads swung round. Mor was on her knees midway between our group and the trickling rill. She rocked to and fro like the singers who mourn the dead. We broke into laughter.

"Not yet, Mor; not yet!" Fitzgerald cried. "Our souls are still in the flesh."

But the sobbing, poignant wail went on; the song of Death, the devourer, a song of wild protest and mourning. We were Gaels, for even Fitzgerald might claim Irish blood in the 500 years that had passed since his Norman forefathers had entered the land, and we might have been sobered at another moment. But the careless guard kept on the convoy had raised the hearts of men who were soldiers and saw their prey at their feet. My comrades joked at the

cavine, which an order from Sarsfield presently stopped. Mor was told that she would be driven from the mountain should she utter a lament again.

She rose and came towards us. A spur of the range had hidden the convoy, and a stream of bright light broke between the pale clouds, making a wide path up the green mountain cone. Her gray face was lit up in the hard glare.

"Men of Erin!" she said in a loud voice. "A power sent me up the slope. Mo bion! mo bion! Against my will I came. Would you learn your fate, gallant lads; would you learn what God will give you?"

"Yes! Yes!" we cried, our spirits gay, ready to give her a moment's attention. "Our lands restored, our faith respected; nothing less will suit us, Mor!"

"You ask much, my sons. My grief! my grief!" She drew near O'Kavanagh and looked in his face.

"Here," said Fitzgerald, "I want to know my fate! A bright eye, a good glass, and a quick run home at the last, such is my wish, woman of the fates!"

She made no answer, still looking at O'Kava-

nagh. "There will be blood on your hands," she said in a low voice, but we all heard her.

"A rival's!" exclaimed Fitzgerald. "Comrades, we are warned! O'Kavanagh claims Ethne og! and has vowed to sweep me from his path!"

O'Kavanagh looked at him with cool, smiling eyes; the rest of us laughed. "Tell me, Mor, shall I win through this siege?" he asked. "Shall I keep my life?"

"The grave is beneath you," she said, "but not yet the black narrow house. Ochone, mo chroide! Ochone!"

Our mocking laughter greeted her words. We turned again to look on the plain. The gleam of steel showed at the end of the spur; the keen, alert look sprang back to our eyes. There was a tense pause, broken suddenly by the woman.

"The grave, the grave, did I say!" she wailed. "Mhuire astruagh! happy and at rest would his body be deep in the cold lap of the grave. Ochone! there is no grave for him. The comely body molders on the wide plain of slaughter where the dogs feed."

None of us answered; our eyes were devouring the long line of wagons and horses. The convoy

was riding due west, and we knew it was ours. Suddenly the dog moaned and O'Kavanagh turned. "My hound does not like you, Mor," he said. "And as for plains of slaughter, I have seen many this year." He spoke as if he had but just heard her words.

She moved her bared head from side to side, as if in pain. "They were little fields to the great slopes," she muttered. "My grief! but little fields!"

Fitzgerald looked round with a swift gesture. "If this mother of misfortune does not stop her dismal prophecy, I'll pitch her into the valley," he remarked, "where she can curse the convoy."

Mor turned to him, her eyes widened with a look of grief. "For you, son of the Geraldines, for you," she answered mournfully, "I hear the singing of the wings of death."

Fitzgerald laughed. "Take the Cassandra away," he exclaimed. "By my faith, this is a cheerful soul. Hogan," he called to the scout, "does the sean-matair dwell in a churchyard?"

The man shifted his feet and looked back with a grin. "Oh, duine-uasal! I do not be listening to her seeings! But," he added with pride, "she has the gift, my soul to the devil! She has! What

is it that you have seen for me, mother of my mother ? ”

“The gallows ! and ochone ! ochone ! I shall see it,” came the answer, and the old woman moaned. At this moment Sarsfield approached ; he stood still and gazed on the plain, and we rose and clustered round him, our eyes on his face.

“They suspect nothing,” he said. “Gentlemen, I have seldom seen a more careless march. The Prince of Orange must, indeed, think that we dare not pass the Shannon when he brings up a battering train so ill-guarded. We shall learn before night where they encamp.”

“And then, mon General —— ?” I saluted as I spoke.

“And then—well, comrades, we will blow up those fine guns,” he looked with an assured bright glance at our faces. We all caught in an instant the same spirit of confidence. His charm of manner, his known skill and valor, made him our idol, and we were ready to follow him to hell’s gate had he asked. A minute later his eyes fell on Mor, who was crooning to herself.

“This woman must leave the mountain,” he said. “She must not approach the men. Sean-bean (old woman), why do you wail ? You should

sing us a brave battle song. Fitzgerald, take her away."

Fitzgerald turned to obey, but Mor, with a sudden air of command, waved him off. "Keep back, my son, keep back, you who are summoned!" she said in a stern, mournful voice. "Padraig Sarsfield must hear my words."

For answer Fitzgerald laid a hand on her shoulder, but Sarsfield bade him desist. "Let her speak," he said, good-humoredly. "But you must be quick, Mor Ni Cohane."

She pointed one arm towards the Keeper peak and fixed her eyes on his face. "Son of the heroes!" she said, a cadence in her voice which held our attention. "To the place of heroes you shall go! Ah! there shall be shouting and joy when you-ride in from battle. And they who have gone before shall come about your saddle, showing their death thrusts, crying in the voice of high pride: Show us yours, brave Sarsfield! Then he, Conall, the victorious, he of the terrible eyes, shall ask in the loud tone of heroes in battle: You of my race! Have you fought for Erin? Have you died for Erin? And you shall answer in your joy and your pride and your sorrow: I have fought for Ireland, long dead hero of my blood; but oh

and oh it is my bitter grief I have not died for Ireland."

The smile left Sarsfield's face, a shadow crossed it for an instant. The woman's words, the wild note in her voice, held us for the minute silent.

"Mor, do you commune with my ancestors, with Conall the Victorious?" he said presently, smiling again. "One would think, gentlemen, she had entered the land where the dead lie. However, God grant I die for Ireland."

"God grant we all die for Ireland!" I answered, and felt time held some gallant deed yet for us to do.

"Sir," said Fitzgerald in that mock-serious tone of his. "This ancient female is in my belief but a re-birth of one of our war-goddesses. There were three, if I remember aright old Felim O'Hagan's mythology. Dana, Babh, Morrigu. Sometimes they come as scarecrows in red hoods. Can anything be more evident!"

"Give her this money," said Sarsfield, "and take her away. Sean-bean, go with this officer, he will lead you as kindly as a son down the mountain."

"Oh, my general," said Fitzgerald, speaking in French, "I am aware I am an orphan, but would

not lose the pathos of my position. Come, woman," he spoke in Irish, "we will jog together down the mountain slope."

But Mor bent and laid the coin at Sarsfield's feet. "Look!" she cried, standing upright, "I have news. Ora! I climbed hither to speak it. One has gone to the Sassenagh with news of this ride!"

We all started and stared from the woman to Sarsfield. A keen light leaped to his eyes, but he showed no alarm.

"Who told you this?" he demanded.

Mor shook her head. "The name I will not tell. One went to the Sassenagh as I came up the Keeper," she answered, the wild note gone from her voice.

Sarsfield looked at Fitzgerald. "Go to Colonel MacMahon and tell him to send scouts towards Limerick," he said coolly. "If there is any movement in the Dutch camp let them report at once."

Fitzgerald hastened to obey, and those of us who had field-glasses swept the country with a keen gaze, but saw no sign of a hostile force in the west. A minute later I was ordered to take Mor from the mountain.

She came with me readily, and we crossed the

ridge, then, plunging through the purple heather, we went over wet moorlands where black rills of water trickled into dark pools. Gray rocks shot up here and there, and grouse rose at our approach. Now and again a hare fled before us, and high over our heads an eagle soared. As the slope became more steep the heather disappeared and a short grass covered the ground. Mor walked with a rapid step, her wild mood gone. As she knew every glen and crest, every track and road, I let her take her own way, my duty going no further than to see she left the mountain. The country was practically unknown to me. My regiment, Sarsfield's Horse, had been with part of the cavalry that had guarded King James on his flight to Kinsale, where, having seen His Majesty embark for France, we had crossed the country from the south to Limerick. I therefore followed Mor into hollows and up the sides of ridges in our undulating descent, till at last we climbed down to a deep gorge, where a stream leapt over great brown rocks, while on each side the steep banks were clothed with oak and larch, holly and laurel and mountain ash ablaze with berries. At intervals the face of the rock showed among the trees, festooned with ivy or half hidden by bright

green fernlike lichen. A track ran by the edge of the stream, sometimes diverging from the water when huge bowlders barred further progress by the bank. After following it for half an hour we reached the mouth of the glen, where a bridge spanned the stream at the point where it issued from the ravine. Beyond the arches I could see the open country, with its rich fields and hedgerows.

"We can part here, my son," said Mor, cheerfully. "You have done your duty and the black spirit has left me."

"One word before we part," I said. "Was it Ethne Ni Brien who tricked me last night? Was it her uncle who rode to the Sassenagh?"

Old Mor shook her head. "I will give you no answer, Niall MacGuinness," she replied. "I am your friend, for my father, Donnead, rode out with the hostings of your grandfather. But speed up the glen! I hear the trampling of hoofs."

I caught the sound as she spoke and ran to the bridge. The road on each side lay up a hill. The unshod hurrying hoofs told me that cattle approached, and a glance to the right revealed the red heads and white horns over the top of the

ridge. Presently the bodies of the leaders appeared and the animals came on with smoking sides and lolling tongues, pushing and shouldering each other. A party of soldiers followed—about a score in number—and the red lining of their green coats told me that they belonged to Kirke's Foot.

"Hide under the arch," cried Mor, clutching my sleeve. "May blindness strike their eyes! I know those black-souled boys!"

But I had caught sight of a woman on horse-back who had halted on the opposite height. "There is a colleen yonder, Mor," I exclaimed, "who may want my help."

"She is safe," said Mor. "Look!" The girl had pulled sharply round and cantered out of sight, followed by a loud shout from the guard.

In an instant Mor fled, and, aware that the soldiers would see me if I lingered, I slipped over the parapet, and sprang into the water. The stream did not rise above my knees, and I waded to the arch. Before long the ground shook overhead and there was a rush, a lowing, a trampling of hoofs. Then followed the measured tramp of feet, and a young voice, a gentleman's voice, cried in English, "Halt!"

There was a sudden cessation in the march. The young voice went on, "The brutes are parched. Sergeant, take ten men and head the cattle. Drive them into the stream."

"The water is deep just below the bridge, your honor," returned a hoarse voice. "And the beeves will break their legs on the rocks on the glen side. I will send a man to search for the shallows."

The movement of feet over my head followed, and I looked round my retreat, cursing the owner of the young voice for his humanity. The river deepened to some eight or nine feet outside the arch, but shoaled again twenty yards further down. The bank on each side was flat, and the man detailed to find the shallows as he followed the left had but to turn his head to see me. I remembered that the next arch was draped in ivy, and, creeping out by the glenside, I waded towards it, expecting each instant to hear a shout from the parapet. The noise of the tumbling water deadened the sound of my advance, and I reached the arch undiscovered. It was sheltered on the deep side of the river by branches of ivy, clump-headed and thick. A log ran near the top from wall to wall, upon which I climbed, lying

flat upon the wood. I was comparatively safe, but was enraged at being detained. I thought of the long ascent of the mountain before me, of my comrades waiting for the night, and feared that I should miss the ride and the capture of the guns.

Presently the thunderous hoofs drew near again, and with shouts and oaths that rose above the bellowing of the steers the cattle were driven to the bank. Through chinks in the ivy I caught glimpses of red shoulders and flanks and white horns bright in the sunlight. Then, as the tumult moved further off, the clattering of galloping hoofs reached my ears, hoofs of a horse and a rider dashed upon the bridge. The pace was suddenly checked, and the horse halted just above my arch. There was a pause, then the officer's voice, apparently close to the rider, was heard above the keystone. His tone carried both surprise and deference—reproof, too, I thought. "Pardon me, madam," I heard him say, "but you should not ride without an escort."

The girl had returned, and as I wondered why her reply was given without hesitation. "I am looking for my guardian, sir," she said in a very sweet treble, speaking English with a brogue.

"He was to meet me a mile from O'Brien's Bridge."

Her voice seemed familiar, but Ethne of the hearts had but spoken to me in Irish and French, and I could not be certain that it was she who had halted over my head.

"Then, madam," said the imperious young voice, "he should have provided you with an escort. These are not days for any of your sex, and, pardon me, madam, especially one of your face and bearing, to ride alone."

"Oh, sir, my face and bearing would have carried me safe through all the land in ancient days. My face would have been better than a thousand swords. Such was the chivalry in the land."

"I do not think your countrymen pay less homage to beauty than we do," said the man's voice, softened.

"Not less, sir, but far more. They have put round our womanhood a halo, till we seem divine."

"Then, madam, I could join with them there, were all of your countrywomen as fair as yourself."

I stirred on my log. I had no desire to listen to this pretty fooling. I wished the fellow would

let the girl go on. I pictured him standing bare-headed, fixing half insolent eyes upon her face.

"You are civil, sir," the treble voice answered, "and since my guardian may be waiting for me, I will ride towards the Shannon."

"You live in Clare, madam? I had hoped, since I do not doubt you are loyal, that you dwelt on our side of the river, when I should have done myself the honor of escorting you home."

There was a pretty silvery laugh. "A thousand thanks, sir, I am indeed loyal. My guardian has friends in your regiment."

"If by some happy fate I might be one."

"There is a gentleman of whom he has spoken much," the treble voice took a childish note of innocence. "An officer of courage, and one who even in my guardian's dull eyes is possessed of handsome looks."

The man's reply came at once; there was evident interest in his tone.

"And the name of this favored gentleman?" he asked.

"His name"—there was a pause as if the girl were trying to recall it. "His name—ah, sure, it comes back to me now. His name was Lieutenant Cole of Kirke's regiment of foot."

In a moment I knew she was playing with the man. It was Ethne, I felt certain, whose horse's fore hoof was pawing the stones above my head.

"My luck is great," he replied. "Lieutenant Cole is my dearest friend."

"Is it true, then, sir," piped the canary-bird voice of the maid; "is it true that he is the bravest and handsomest young man in his regiment?"

Would the fool leap to the bait, I thought. It was clear that she had some plan in her head. For a moment I wondered if I might with honor listen further; then, recalling the suspicions our party entertained of her uncle's loyalty, and her own acquaintance with Lady Honoria, and the importance of keeping our raid a secret, I knew I should fail to do my duty if I did not.

"He has courage," answered the man's voice, "to know that it is safer to lead his men to battle than to run away. As to his face, that, madam, I must leave to the women to judge."

There was an honest ring in the voice that I liked, and I listened again for the rider's pretty notes. "Sure, I should like to judge," she said.

There could be but one reply; the officer gave it.

"Then do so, madam," he exclaimed. "I am Lieutenant Cole."


The silence of an assumed surprise followed, and I wished I could have seen the actress's face. "You!" her tone was admirable. "You! there is confusion on me, sir. I did not think——"

"But you are not looking!" cried Cole. "Madam, how can you judge when your gray eyes are on your pommel?"

A pause followed in which the lady's eyes must have been raised. "Faith, sir, but you are passable." I heard her twitter. My impatience returned as a silence ensued; time was precious, and here were the pair lengthening out a scene that I wanted ended at once. As I crouched fuming, my head touching the stones, the treble note rang out again.

"Since last night, sir, I have had a wish to meet you."

I strained my ears; time, too, was of importance with the maid, or she would not have rushed so rashly to her subject. Cole's answer came at once. "I am indeed favored," he replied, and I liked him again for his respectful tone. "Madam, from this hour my thoughts shall be given to the pleasure of meeting you again,"



"That were too great an exertion, sir. But if you can spare a moment from the siege to do me a service, sure, I shall be grateful."

"I shall have time enough. I can give you hours, days, weeks, should you desire it."

"A too large generosity, sir, but ——" There was a pause, then, after a few moments, she continued, and her voice seemed graver, even genuinely diffident. "No man in the world but you can help me. I have fallen into a difficulty. This letter will tell you all."

Another pause followed, in which the letter must have passed from her hand to Cole's. Then his voice broke the silence. "I swear to help you. Will you tell me your name?"

The horse moved forward. "Not with my lips. They thank you a hundred thousand times. Read the letter when I am gone. Farewell." Her voice died off, the hoofs broke into a gallop.

Cole must have done so at once, for I heard the paper rustling in his hand. Then as he uttered an oath and roared to the Sergeant I felt myself grow cold and my hair stand erect; the girl had betrayed us.

The man came up with a heavy tramp; I raised

my staring eyes to the keystone of the arch and listened with my soul in my ears.

"Drive up the cattle!" Cole called. "Drive them up at once. Damn you, fellows! Turn their heads! It will be night before we reach the camp!" He strode from the bridge, and I heard the Sergeant turn. Then, a minute later, the officer's voice, lowered, eager, said some words which I could not hear.

I dropped into the water and made for the glen. It took me two minutes to wade from rock to rock and reach the bank. Had any of the soldiers looked up the ravine I must have been discovered. But in the hurry of driving the cattle to the road, the stampeding of the animals and the noise caused by the shouts of men and the bel-
lowing of beasts, I managed to escape unnoticed. I hastened by the river path, thinking over what I had heard. I saw that Mor had reported true. O'Brien (for I believed him to be the traitor) had sent a message or gone himself to William's camp. He would not have trusted the delivery of such important information to a young woman on the chance that she might fall across a patrol. Yet Cole's sudden anger and haste told me that the letter had contained some news of moment.

The sun had set before I had reached the shoulder of the mountain and the light was dying off ridge and slope. A wind brought up gold and pink-edged banks of white and gray clouds, while a long black trailing line across the sky showed where the homing crows fled towards the woods of Cratloe. I could hear the distant booming of guns, the lowing of cattle. The wide band of the Shannon had gathered, and for a few minutes longer held the gleam of the sky; the Clare mountains beyond stood out deep blue and purple against the crimson light where the sun had sunk.

CHAPTER IV

NIGHT overtook me as I crossed the ravine where the squadrons had encamped. I plunged through the heather, and the rising wind went thrilling down the gorge. Thick, hurrying clouds sped across the sky, darkening the side of the slope. Then a golden rim of light showed between the shoulders of the mountain and the moon rose. It flooded my path with mellow light, and I hurried on. As I reached the crest of the ridge it became obscured, and I paused for a moment to make sure of my path. To my left all was black, the round cone of the Keeper looking like a cloud upon the night. A minute later, as if a curtain had been drawn aside, the clouds shifted and the wide embracing light covered the mountains and the plain. At the same instant an armed man approached, who capped me with much deference.

"The marc sluagll (troop of cavalry) are gone," he said, "but you can overtake them yet."

"On my feet?" I said impatiently. "The fools have taken my horse!"

"Your horse has a good sheaf of oats to his head. I have news for you, tigearna (lord)."

I looked around in the moonlight and caught sight of a horse in a hollow, and without waiting for the Rapparee's tidings hurried to the spot. A small garran kept company with my charger; I freed the reins and was in the saddle before the man had joined me.

"The speed is on you," he said, with approval, "but without one to guide you will do little good."

He was across the garran as he spoke, and, kicking the sides of the wiry beast, galloped down the mountain. I followed, keeping my horse's head by the garran's flank, and thus we rode for an hour, now descending and again climbing some height. As we went the man told me his news. Scouts had brought word that the convoy had encamped by a ruined castle seven miles from Limerick. Sarsfield was creeping forward and would not strike till midnight. There was plenty of time, he assured me, in which to overtake the squadrons.

Presently we saw a light beneath us in a hollow, which my guide said came from a blacksmith's forge. One or two figures crossed the glow, and

as we drew near we heard the clang of the hammer.

"Shawn Dubh works late," said my guide.
"Some rider has lost his horse's shoe."

We followed a narrow track by a tinkling rill which ran by the forge. A dark and brawny figure plied the hammer on a hot bar of iron. Two men, Rapparees I judged from the old muskets and pikes they carried, watched the smith as he worked.

At the sound of our approach they turned stern faces to the door, but changed their air as their eyes fell upon my guide.

"Padraig Sarsfield is a mile ahead," they said, baring their heads. The blacksmith looked up, dropped his hammer and hastened to the door. "Which hoof is it, duine-uasal?" he asked, as his gaze searched the hoofs of my war horse. "Name of Christ! but I will shoe your fine steed with speed that you may ride with Sarsfield!"

But my attention was attracted to a woman dressed in a traveling suit, who sat in a corner of the forge with a bowl of milk in her hand. The blacksmith's wife sat by her side.

"Who is that?" I inquired.

"Och, a woman of the Sassenaghs," he answered

as he raised a hoof. "The boys brought her in. She is to be kept here till the General is across the Shannon."

Though we spoke in Irish, the woman seemed to know she was the subject of our conversation, for she rose, courtesied and came to the door. The two Rapparees watched her like hawks, but at the same time made way for her to pass. Her face was young, and her eyes large and China blue.

"Sir," she said in English, "I had lost my way when I met a courteous gentleman, followed by a goodly body of cavalry. I was able to tell him the watchword, and, having promised me his protection, he gave me into the charge of these two men, who indeed have treated me civilly, save that they will not let me leave this forge. This woman and her man speak naught but Irish, and I cannot make myself understood. I am in haste to reach the camp where my man is a-soldiering. His name is Hinks. It may be you have met him. He was indeed beneath me in birth and standing, for my milliner's shop in Bristol was one patronized by ladies of distinction, the lady of Sir Walter Spinet Knight and the lady——"

But I interrupted her, and my tone was tense. "The watchword of the convoy, madam?"

"No other, sir, for I had joined it under the charge of a most pleasant and civil gentleman, by name Captain Pulteney."

"But the watchword! Speak it!" I leaned down towards her in my eagerness to catch the word.

She simpered and blushed. "Truly, sir, no female of modesty likes so close a survey. But you seem impatient. My father, a respected barber-surgeon, living in Bristol city, told me I was a fool to throw myself away on Master Hinks. That was five years ago, and I have had cause to see the wisdom of his warning. But I was always a fanciful maid, and Ephraim Hinks having served in Tangiers, had tales of marvel that tickled my ears ——"

"Men!" I sat up in the saddle and cried out in Irish, "men! what countersign did this fool tell Sarsfield?"

"What! we thought your honor knew!" they replied. "It is Sarsfield's own name! Sarsfield! God's hand is in it!"

I pulled my horse round. "Are the squadrons straight ahead?" I called, my blood on fire.

"They are, they are! Glory go with you! God be with you! 'Tis a night of power!"

My war horse answered to the spur, and with one stride clearing the rill, he dashed forward. The ground was level now and the moonlight whitened the fields. Our luck in meeting the woman, the strange coincidence of the countersign assured me of success. We should outrace the messenger who would have defeated our plan. I felt the blood dancing in my veins ; I could have shouted with delight as my eyes searched across the meadows. Twenty minutes or more passed, then out of the night the forms of men and horses emerged and I knew I was upon the tail of the rear-guard. In front I saw the ruined walls of a castle whitened by a wave of moonlight. A glow to the west told where a camp-fire lay, and a light gleamed in the window of some small building. Presently the column halted and I slackened my pace lest the sound of galloping hoofs should catch the ears of the sentries posted by the convoy. After a brief pause the squadrons were set again in motion and I crept down through an oat-field, keeping in the shadow of the hedge. A dense cloud suddenly covered the moon and the long line of men and horses was swallowed up in the darkness that followed.

I dared not break into a gallop and groped for-

ward at a walk to where the troops had vanished. The brief interval of darkness covered their approach. But the wind bore the bank of vapor rapidly onward and broke it up into detached fragments. I could hear the tread of hoofs going forward and the click of steel. I held my breath in that moment of tense excitement. Then next minute a shrill voice suddenly challenged, and the moon gliding free of the clouds showed our cavalry within a few yards of the camp and the figure of the sentry as the man stood alert with leveled musket.

Shaking my reins loose I gripped my saddle with my knees and galloped forward. Some one challenged again in a loud suspicious voice, and the trumpet answered, sounding the charge, ringing out like death's own call in the night. A voice, fierce, exultant, cried, "Sarsfield is the name and Sarsfield is the man!" The drawn sabres flashed into a long line of ice-blue light in the moonlight and the thunder of charging hoofs rolled across the field. Those by the guns awoke, leaped to their feet. I heard their captain shriek for the trumpet to sound to horse, then I dashed on by the ranks. Men with the sleep in their eyes searched for their arms, and were cut down

as they searched. Some of the guard ran towards the picketed horses, but were caught in their flight. All was confusion, shouts and oaths, outcries of agony, the trampling of hoofs.

As I swung by the shadow of the castle I was tilted against by a dragoon who had seized a horse and was fighting his way from the camp. For a brief space our blades crossed before the man swung round and sped back along the field with my sword within two yards of his neck. Then as I called out to him to yield his horse stumbled and down the animal plunged, its rider sending a curse out into the night as he shot over its head. The impetus of my pace carried me straight on to the door of the house from the windows of which I had seen the light. As I reined my horse back on its haunches I saw across the threshold a young man defending himself from three of my men, one of whom had reloaded his carbine. The officer stood on a stair; the men filled the narrow passage.

I roared to them to give quarter, then sprang from my horse and struck up the carbine. They turned with fierce faces and oaths on their lips, but their eyes sobered as they recognized me.

"Tigearna, we had given him quarter," said

one of the troopers, "but he has a paper on him, and I and MacSweeny and O'Brien looking at his purse, he snatched back his sword and said—for I know Bearld (English) that he would send us to hell first before we got the paper. Then he sprang upon the step and I thought a ball would end the talk."

I turned to the officer, a young man with a dogged jaw. His defiant eyes had the fine light of youth. A buoyant confidence showed in his manner. "Do you yield, sir?" I asked.

He kept his guard. "I shall fight to the last before I yield my letter," he answered, and I started at his tone. It was that of the man who had spoken to the girl on the bridge. I looked closer at his face. "Your men are welcome to my purse," he went on, "but the letter I shall guard while this sword is in my hand."

"Sir," I replied, "I honor your courage. But I am aware of the contents of your letter. I marvel that you did not put your information to better advantage and keep a more careful watch. Your men are killed or fled. It is a pity you should throw your life away to hide a name which is already known."

"I give you my word of honor as an English

officer," the young man cried out in a high, resolute tone, "I give you my word that it is not a dispatch I carry, that I have been but an hour in this house and that the letter in no way bears on the war. The name of the writer I have promised not to divulge unless given leave to do so. Therefore, sir, if you insist on examining a letter which deals with a personal matter you shall read it only when I am dead."

The troopers looked at me like hounds held in leash. From without the shouting of our officers as they directed our men to break the boats and load the guns could be heard above the last sobbing echoes of the fight. I met the young man's eyes in silence for a moment.

"This you swear, pledging your honor?" I said.

"Pledging my honor, I swear to the truth of my words," he replied. We regarded each other an instant longer. Then I bade the men leave the house.

"I accept your word, sir," I remarked. "You can keep your letter."

His face suddenly flushed. He had been prepared to sell his life in order to be true to his trust. But he was young and life was pleasant,

and now in a moment there was no need for him to die. I felt that if this man had not been my foe I should have made him a friend. He bowed and tendered me his sword.

"I shall not forget your courtesy, sir," he replied, the boyish ring in his tone. "I am Lieutenant Cole of the Tangiers regiment, known as Kirke's Foot."

I took the weapon and returned the bow. "I am Niall MacGuinness of Iveagh," I replied, "a captain in Sarsfield's Horse. I must ask you to accompany me now, and I will present you to my general."

I walked out of the house and we crossed the field, strewn with the dead. Sarsfield stood by the guns, giving orders that were carried out by the troopers with the rapidity and coolness of disciplined men. The draught horses, together with those that had belonged to the dragoons, were being driven in, and figures moved swiftly to and fro in the vague light, throwing the stores and wagons into one great heap.

I saluted, and having introduced my prisoner, turned away to lend a hand in the work. A few yards further on I knocked against Fitzgerald, who had been carrying an order for the General.

"Old Mor was wrong!" he exclaimed gayly. "The wings have passed me by. But, my God, Iveagh, we have got the guns!"

"Are they loaded?" I asked.

"To the muzzle! Our men have seen to that! There is O'Kavanagh yonder, rolling casks of biscuit like a common trooper!"

I ran on and joined my friend. Together we worked for a few minutes, other officers, too, helping and directing the men. Then O'Kavanagh stopped and raised himself to his full height. "We have done here," he said. "Let us go to Sarsfield."

The moon had set and there was a gray light in the east. We walked back, leading our horses by the bridle to the spot where the General stood. I saw my prisoner still before him and heard Sarsfield as he spoke.

"Young gentleman," he said, "if I had failed in that enterprise I should have gone to France." His eyes fell on us as we approached. "Captain O'Kavanagh!" he called, "take this officer to the rear and see that he is given a horse."

O'Kavanagh stepped briskly forward and doffed his hat to Cole. The prisoner returned the salute, then his face suddenly paled, he drew back

a step. Whatever impression he had received, however, quickly passed and he accompanied O'Kavanagh across the field. I heard their voices conversing in friendly tones as they retired.

The work meanwhile went forward merrily. The men joked as they sank the muzzles of the guns in the ground and heaped the powder around the great mass of provisions and wood ; yet under their mirth was a grimness, too. To Fitzgerald and myself was given the honor of firing the train, and we stood together watching the scene. In less than twenty minutes the pile was complete and the train laid. Then the recall was sounded and the men fell back to their horses.

A second peal sent them into their saddles, a third they wheeled, each man leading a captured horse by the bridle, and galloped off. For a moment we looked at the retreating squadrons, then turned to the fuse.

"The best hour of my life!" exclaimed Fitzgerald, and lit his match. A few seconds later we ran back to our horses and sprang into the saddles. Setting spurs to their sides, we sped up the slope, took the wall in our line and had swung through the oat-field before the thunder of the ex-

plosion filled the air with a terrific sound. A great flame leaped up in the cloud of smoke, broke through it and flung its reflection afar, till the whole side of the southern sky blazed a lurid red. The roar of the bursting guns as they were hurled into the air echoed across the golden valley to Limerick City, reaching the ears of our foes in their camp and telling the garrison of our success. We stood up in our stirrups and looked back, waving our swords as we cheered. The fierce light shone on Fitzgerald's exultant face, touched his cuirass and uplifted weapon. He pointed to the west with a mocking laugh, and on the edge of the horizon I caught a glimpse of horsemen. For a few seconds we watched their course; then with laughter we settled into our saddles and cantered after our squadron.

The enemy's cavalry swerved and galloped in the direction of O'Brien's Bridge to intercept our passage. But Sarsfield led us north, heading for Lough Derg. Before long our movement was noticed by the foe, who detached a body of horse in pursuit.

The day had broken before their van came into view. Looking back, I saw their horses advancing with stretched necks and smoking sides, the

men's sabres a-glitter in the gleams of the risen sun. A trumpet rang on our side, and in a moment our rear wheeled, the charge was given and we galloped back. The fresh morning air cut my face, smiting my eyes, piping in my ears as my horse rocked beneath me. Our pace increased as we drew near the long line of gleaming steel and looked into our foes' faces. A minute later the air seemed filled with sighs from the singing of the wind by the swords as they swung outward, met and clashed. The shock of the impact broke up the front lines, and friend and foe were mingled together. A man sank here and there from his saddle; the strife raged some minutes. Then the enemy, outnumbered, turned and galloped off, pursued a few yards till the trumpet summoned us back.

We rode unmolested after the encounter for some hours, and drew near the waters of Lough Derg. As our van crossed the bridge at Bannagher the foe, which we had outdistanced till then, charged again upon our wearied ranks. We held them back with our rear, losing fifteen men in that attack. In the skirmish I found Fitzgerald by my side, and almost at the same moment one of Lanier's troopers rushed upon him and ran him

through. As I dashed upon the man a shot sent him backward, and I turned to Fitzgerald. His sword had fallen from his hand, he reeled in his saddle. Holding him up, I saw that his wound was mortal, and, guiding both horses towards the rear, reached the bridge.

The enemy had been dispersed and the troopers were closing in. I pushed on to the bridge, and Fitzgerald's head fell back on my arm. A glance showed me that the spring of youth, of life, was passing—that I bore a fast dying man. Then the cavalry closed about us, the hoofs echoed loudly on the flags, I saw the blue water swirling on my right; the men's laughter and oaths filled the air. On the bank I halted, and looked again into the face on my arm, thrown back, with open eyes, staring upward.

"Fitzgerald! Killed!" It was O'Kavanagh's voice. He halted his war horse and leaned across the saddle. "A sword thrust! Great God! I am sorry! God be with his soul!"

To meet death, and to see death given were but every-day events in our life, yet I swear that my soul was filled with awe and sorrow as I looked into that face on my arm.

In the pause the last of the rear-guard passed.

The men had laid a train to an arch and warned us of the coming explosion. O'Kavanagh must have seen the numb look I wore, for he struck the horses, and I found myself galloping up the field, my arm still supporting my comrade's dead body in the saddle. The animals headed for a group of officers, who had halted on the ridge and stopped short when they reached them, the reins dangling on their necks. A roar the next moment told that the train had caught, the pier rocked and sundered, hurling the stones into the air and leaving a gap no man could cross. I sprang to the ground, and with O'Kavanagh's aid lifted Fitzgerald's body from the saddle. Some peasants stood near, and I sent one to find a priest. The officers presently joined us, uttering expressions of regret. But they were filled with delight at the success of the expedition, and their mourning was brief. Our lives made us callous, and they soon laughed again. But as I stood by the body, looking at the gallant dead, I seemed to hear the cavine, to feel the nearness of hungry, hostile powers, whose blows not God himself can avert.

We drew near Limerick that afternoon and our progress became a triumph. In the cavalry camp the regiments were drawn up and we were loudly

cheered by the men. Such heart had the capture of the guns put into the garrison that our batteries were being served with zeal, and a hot fire poured into the enemy's lines. As we approached Thomond Bridge we were met by crowds bearing banners and laurel boughs, and on entering the city a great shout went up at the sight of Sarsfield. A salute was fired from the castle, and the Duke of Berwick, De Boisseleau, and the principal Jacobite officers galloped forward to meet us. There was a halt on the bridge, a brief address to the troops, congratulations, hand-shakings, cheers; then the Governor and Berwick wheeled their horses and entered the city by Sarsfield's side.

The crowds increased in the streets; men and women pressed close to our bridle reins and clasped our hands. Cheer after cheer rang out; pipe and harp struck notes of triumph; from windows women and children flung flowers on our heads. Then, in the midst of the shouting and singing, I felt a hand on my knee, and, looking down, saw a servant in bright livery holding on to my stirrup leather.

"My lord!" the man cried, "my noble master, the Lord Brittas, gives a ball to-night in honor of

the capture of the guns and expects you, most gallant gentleman, and all gallant officers to be present."

He dropped the leather and pushed on, shouldering his way through the crowd till he reached another of my comrades, when he shouted his message again. Presently I lost sight of him as our procession moved slowly down Great Street, halting at last at Ball Bridge. Unable by the density of the crowd to wheel and return by the same street, we filed into the next outlet and thus made a slow progress back to the castle. Sarsfield left us here, and, followed by the passionate cheers of the citizens, entered the fortress with the Duke and De Boisseleau. We rode our tired horses once more across Thomond Bridge, and so went back to camp, singing songs and carrying wreaths and bouquets on the points of our sabres.

On reaching the camp I alighted and went to my tent. After I had had food and changed my uniform I flung myself on my bed and smoked. I reflected that I was penniless, and should remain so until my agent in Paris sent me the last of the louis d'or I had banked in that city. There would be ombre and lansquenet and a dozen other

games of hazard played that night at my Lord Brittas's house, and I should cut a poor figure with empty pockets. I was owed my pay, which had been tendered to me some days previously in King James's brass tokens. I had declined them with what courtesy I possessed, saying I would wait till it was more convenient for His Majesty to discharge his debts towards his officers. I regretted now that I had not taken the base things. There would no doubt be plenty of them on card and dice tables !

As I mused the curtain of my tent was raised, and a man came in, cap in hand. It was Galloping Hogan, and I wondered what had brought him from the uisgebagh that his services had earned. His bronzed, humorous face looked sober, his hawk eye clear. I pointed to a cup of wine on the table.

"Why are you not in the city ?" I asked. "I thought your friends would have held you there."

"My word ! I will be there in time, tigearna (lord). It was my mother's mother sent me hither. And willingly I came."

I bade him sit down and drink the wine. But he did not obey.

"I do not like your mother's mother," I said.
"She foretold a brave friend's death."

"The Lord have mercy on his soul!" said Hogan, and crossed himself. "It is true, tigearna, she has the gift, and I shall be hung. But first——" the man's face darkened, "I shall send many a Saxon bodagh (churl) to hell."

"Some of us may be there before the siege ends. But what do you want, brave Hogan, if you will neither rest nor drink?"

The man drew a purse from his pocket. "Tigearna," he answered, his tone changing with the courtesy of the Celt to that of one about to ask a favor instead of confer it. "Tigearna, my mother's people followed your father, and they came from Uladh, and it was the honor of the world with them to serve the chief of Iveagh. When we took the guns I found two purses full of English gold on the field, and I yield to you the larger as being your right and share of a clansman's spoil."

I raised myself, surprised at his act. "I will borrow the smaller one from you," I said. "But it shall be but a loan, Hogan. I have sent to France for gold, and will repay you."

"My soul! Niall MacGuinness!" He looked

grieved, offended. "My soul! I will not take it. It is your right you would refuse. It is an honor on me to be able to give you your share of the spoil."

He laid the purse on the table and stalked from the tent. I was struck by the man's generosity, but determined to accept the gold only as a loan. With a purse thus refilled, I felt no longer embarrassed, and determined to attend the ball. About an hour after he had gone, O'Kavanagh came to the door of my tent and inquired if I was returning to Limerick. He still wore his uniform, and on my reply entered the tent, followed by his hound.

"Whom did you see at Cloona?" he said abruptly.

I paused as I was about to sling on my belt. "Manus O'Brien," I replied, "who received me civilly."

"Do you think it was he who warned the Prince of Orange?"

"It's probable," I returned.

I glanced at O'Kavanagh as I spoke. He seemed in his usual gay, careless mood, but his gray eyes held some thought that had driven both humor and kindness from them.

"It is not alone probable, it is true," he said, and suddenly walked to a seat and sat down.

"Have you proof?" I asked.

"No, I speak from the conviction of my soul. Iveagh, if Boisseleau questions you as to O'Brien's guilt, will you stand my friend? Will you lie?"

I put on my belt before I answered. "I would lie to save a friend's life," I said, "or a woman's honor; but, by my faith, O'Kavanagh, I do not desire to lie to shield a traitor."

"It is not the traitor, Niall, for whom you will lie, but for me."

I straightened myself and regarded him with thought.

"Otherwise, for Ethne," I said slowly.

He leaned his elbows on his knees and framed his face in his hands. "Yes, for Ethne, if you like," he said, "but it will be your friend whom you will serve."

"Look! Murrough! I would lie to save your life, but I will not lie to save Manus O'Brien's life. If he is a traitor he deserves death. I am not sure Ethne of the hearts is not also one."

"If another man said that I would run him through," said O'Kavanagh quietly, without moving. "You being my friend I spare."

"Oh, away with women and love!" I answered. "What we have to remember now is that we are men standing behind half-dismantled walls, with a powerful foe in front."

He arose abruptly to his feet. "Are you one of Lord Brittas's guests?" he asked.

"Yes, and you?"

He nodded, smiled and held out his hand. I took it, and we looked into each other's eyes.

"No woman shall break our friendship," I said, reading the look in his.

"I pray God and Mary not," he replied, and went out of the tent.

CHAPTER V

I FOLLOWED, but he looked back and told me not to wait for him, as he was about to change his dress. My servant had gone to find me a mount, so I strolled through the camp. The men who had captured the guns were relating their adventures to groups of interested and excited listeners. Loud ejaculations, thanksgivings in our rich tongue and Sarsfield's name echoed on all sides. Presently a sergeant approached me and asked where he was to send the prisoner.

"What prisoner?" I asked.

"The one Your Honor captured," he replied.
"He is in that tent yonder."

I walked at once in the direction indicated and found Cole lying on the ground half asleep. He opened his eyes and rose quickly to his feet as I entered. After we had greeted each other I asked him if he would accept parole.

He had evidently made up his mind to do so, for he answered at once that he was glad to take it, adding that he expected to be exchanged soon.

I invited him to my tent, told him of the ball without laying any stress upon the reason for the festivity, and asked him if he would like to attend. He said he would give me an answer in a few minutes, and I ordered my man to bring wine and food and then find a second horse.

Cole thanked me as he ate, and of his own accord referred to our capture of the guns. He said that it was cleverly done, and that Sarsfield was a gallant officer. "However," he concluded, "our King will soon make good the loss of his battering train." I replied that no doubt we would be able to give as good an account of the new guns as we had done of the old ones, and then, to leave a subject that might grow into a heated argument unbecoming our present positions, I asked him how he had chanced to be in the field. He answered that he had received a command, while in charge of a patrol, to ride thither and hasten Captain Pulteney's movements.

After he had asked for shaving materials I left him and went to see the horses. Then I strolled to O'Kavanagh's tent and found that he had gone. On returning to my own tent I met Cole at the door, brushed and shaved. He told me that he

would be glad to attend the ball, and I guessed that he had a secret hope that he might meet the lady of the letter.

It was night as we left the camp, and on reaching Limerick we found the city ablaze with light, every house illuminated. The citizens, gayly dressed, surged up and down the streets and lanes and along by the river bank. Now and again some voice rose high and thrilling, calling upon God to grant health and victory to Sarsfield. Once, and once only, a man in the crowd mocked Cole as he rode at my side. But I struck him with the flat of my sword, and the rest cheered me for my act.

A great number of persons had gathered before my Lord Brittas's house to see the guests alight. These were coming in sedan chairs or in great family coaches; some, too, on horseback, and some on foot. All of the highest of the Jacobite party were gathering to the festival. Men in new uniforms, men in old; officers of the new levies in gay civilian clothes with badges to show their rank; ladies in fine silks and laces; the heads of the Gaelic and old Anglo-Irish families with their wives and laughing daughters; each one ready to forget that the enemy still sat without and that

the horrors of a bombardment hung over the city.

As Cole and I drew up in the wide circle of light thrown from the windows and door of the house, I saw Mor standing among the crowd. She wore a white cap tied with ribbon, and appeared no longer possessed by her dark, prophetic spirit, looking an alert-eyed, active old woman. She met my glance and nodded; then I saw her gaze hang upon Cole.

We dismounted and gave up our horses to my servant, and went into the hall. Here the stream of guests made our movement slow. A wide, dark stair led to the ballroom, while through an open door on our right numerous card tables, surrounded by players of both sexes, could be seen. Some one jostled my arm in the crowd. I turned and met Purcell's eyes.

"A greeting and a congratulation," he said suavely. "Who is your companion?"

Before I could reply two or three officers came up and welcomed me loudly. One was Colonel Lutterel, a man popular enough just then.

"Ha! my hero of the ride!" he exclaimed. "I am glad to see you. There are numbers of pretty women about to-night to praise you lads.

The King ought to give Sarsfield supreme command! Last night's work has done him good service."

I introduced Cole to him and his companions, young O'Carroll being one, but did not introduce the Englishman to Purcell. Lutterel asked him if he would join a party that he was forming for cards.

"I should be pleased to do so, sir," Cole replied in that young, arrogant voice of his, a tone no doubt a protest against our rejoicings, full of the scorn of his party for the Irish. It did not anger me; it would not be there, I knew, when the lad had served through a few campaigns. But I saw O'Carroll look hot.

"You show a condescension, sir," he said.

Cole bowed stiffly. "I was about to add," he answered, "that I should have much pleasure in taking a hand at cards if your men had not emptied my pockets."

"They have received some education in thieving, sir, from Kirke's Foot," replied O'Carroll, speaking slowly in the unfamiliar English. "If your men mend their manners we may think about ours."

The older of the officers frowned at O'Carroll,

and I hastened to restore peace. Cole was my prisoner and guest, and the laws of chivalry demanded that I should stand by his side. I drew out some gold and tendered it to him. "Lieutenant, let me supply your need," I said; "there are a few pieces." Then as the sovereigns lay bright on my palm I met Purcell's eyes.

"What, have you repaired your luck, my Lord Iveagh?" he said. "If I remember aright you had not even a brass coin two days ago. Your luck has been rapid."

I looked at him for a few seconds, and something in my eyes perhaps silenced his tongue. He smiled and turned away. The other men regarded the scene without much interest. O'Carroll was thirsting in his hot youth for war, and the others had given themselves up to the enjoyment of the night.

"You are very kind, Captain Iveagh," said Cole. "I will take a few pieces as a loan. And you, gentlemen," he looked towards the group, "are the witnesses that I have received ten gold pieces from this officer and that I promise to pay him on my exchange or should I win to-night."

I left the party and went up the stair to the ballroom, where I made but slow progress across

the apartment. Ladies whom I had never seen before bowed and smiled as I passed; men, strangers to that hour, grasped my hand. Presently I discovered that every officer who had accompanied Sarsfield was receiving a similar ovation. Bright smiles, warm greetings, were showered upon us from all sides, and the plainest among us could hold up his head, clink his spurs and bask in the smiles of the women and the admiration of the men.

The greetings seemed to me to be excessive; we had done our duty and blown up the guns. Limerick appeared to think such a feat had never been performed before. No doubt we had made the defense of the city possible, but there was hot work awaiting us yet. Suddenly a woman's hand touched my arm, and I looked down to see Lady Honoria by my side. Her face reflected the general joy.

"I am the proudest woman in Ireland to-night," she said, her pretty lips melting into a smile. "Have I not told you so, Captain Purcell?"

In the moment of greeting I had overlooked the man upon whose arm she leant, and I now glanced at him across her head. The fight had gone out of his eyes; he bowed and remarked that no

woman in Ireland could rival her for beauty and wit.

She broke into a laugh. "It is not for beauty and wit, sir!" she cried. "Beauty and wit! Do you not know that Ethne Ni Brien is in the room? It is because I am General Sarsfield's wife that I hold my head high to-night." She drew her hand from his arm. "Go, sir," she said, "I would speak to my Lord Iveagh."

He obeyed, having first bowed, and I thought no more of him. Lady Honoria slipped her arm through mine, and we moved on. I led her to a seat by the window.

"Perhaps you guessed why I dismissed that little man, Purcell?" she said confidentially. "I do not like him, and have told Patrick so. But my husband is the most generous-minded soul in the world, and thinks ill of no one till their guilt is proved."

I joined in the praise of Sarsfield, but held my tongue about Purcell. I knew he was a coward, and I guessed he was a liar, but I was not going to say that to a woman. She went on:

"It was a great relief to me, my lord, to find that pretty Ethne was not captured. But pray tell me where you have put the cross?"

I looked inquiringly into her face. "Did Ethne Ni Brien not give it to you?" I asked.

"Give it? No! How could she? She did not find it."

"Then Heaven knows where it may be," I replied, surprised at her answer. "I have not got it."

She rose to her feet with a gesture of fear. For a minute she stood looking before her with distressed eyes. Then the cloud passed from her face. "You have told no one of this," she said, "or of my negligence?"

I assured her I had been silent, and she smiled again. "I will not think of the cross to-night," she exclaimed. "You will help me yet, I believe." She laid a stress on the last word, and with a bright air asked me to follow her into an apartment that opened off the ballroom. As I obeyed the musicians struck up a dance, and men began to lead out their partners. She passed cleverly among the gliding figures, and once or twice threw me a pretty glance across her white shoulder. O'Kavanagh stood in the doorway. His eyes were on the ground, and he appeared to be listening to a stout man who was giving his opinion on the effect that the capture of the bat-

tering train would have upon the siege. I struck him lightly on the shoulder.

"So you are here," he said, looking round. He smiled, but his eyes had a vigilant look.

"What are you doing?" I asked.

"Doing! Blushing at my own valor," he answered. "When did you leave the camp?"

"A good hour ago. I brought the English lad, Cole. Faith, Murrough, some of our fellows are pluming their feathers to-night! Some of us will pay for this hour's conceit with a taste of steel in the dueling yard."

"That is true," he said. "You would think that guns had never been captured before."

"Gentlemen, gentlemen," exclaimed the stout man, "do not underrate your grand ride. But I think I know what has brought you young bloods here. Ho, ho, yes," he added, knowingly, "it is not to avoid those who praise you, but the eyes of the lady yonder." He pointed to where a girl dressed in pale blue sat alone on the opposite side of the room.

I made no answer, but looked towards her critically. She seemed very young, younger than her years which I had heard were nineteen, and was pretty, but not as pretty as I had expected. Lady

Honorina at the same moment beckoned to me, and I hastened to join that charming woman. Her destination was obvious ; she led me across the room, saying that she wished to introduce me to one whom she loved. Ethne og's eyes were on the ground, the maid's face wore a look of dreamy repose.

"Sweetheart," said my companion, "I bring you my Lord Iveagh, whom I wish you to know. He has been in the ride, and is one of our heroes to-night."

I made the bow I had learned in France, and the maid without looking at me, bent her head. There was something almost timid in the action. I wondered if she thought of our first encounter, then doubted if one so young and dainty had ever ventured from the city on the enemy's side. Lady Honorina presently left us and a silence followed.

I was disappointed as I stood by the girl's side, giving guarded glances at her face. I had expected radiant beauty in Ethne of the hearts. The face I looked at had charm and the delicate loveliness that is associated with saint-like qualities, something spiritual and apart. I could understand men going on their knees to worship her as

they would a saint, with no thought of human desire. She seemed to forbid passionate rage, jealousy and hate; she looked as fair and cold as a moonbeam.

For the moment I could find no words to break the silence, and she appeared to forget my presence. One white, rather thin arm rested on the carved side of the seat, and her listless hand held a fan. Then her indifference stirred me to speak.

"Bean-uasal (lady)," I said, "pardon my silence. Your presence sent my thoughts towards another member of your family. You have, I think, an aged relative—a grandaunt, perhaps—and I would know if she were well."

The girl looked up, and in that glance I knew how she won men. It made her a woman, adorable, lovely, a being to set hearts on fire.

"Duine-uasal (sir)," she said sweetly, "my grandaunt is in heaven."

Her eyes sank again, not in bashfulness, but because I ceased to hold her attention. Her face, her pose, told me that as clearly as if she had said the words. I had intruded upon her, but she would forgive the intrusion and forget me.

I noted her diamond buckled shoe as one foot peeped out from under her brocaded silk, and

thought of Mor's bare feet. A sudden cold shiver seized me as I remembered she had been in the hands of Kirke's Lambs. I remembered, too, that I had spoken lightly to the hooded figure of Ethne of the hearts.

"May I speak to you, bean-usal?" I said.

She answered that I might, after a moment's pause that showed that her thoughts were elsewhere, but there was no attention in her air.

"It may have occurred to you," I remarked, and threw a reflective note into my voice, "that we all make mistakes and let our foolish prejudices guide our tongue. This is a result, as a rule, of hastily formed conclusions. We are covered with shame when we find how wrong we have been."

My pompous discourse received the reward I had hoped for; Ethne looked at me.

"That grandaunt of whom you spoke," she replied, "taught me something of this, but I thought her doting and paid little attention to her words."

"Then, bean-usal, if that venerable lady failed to impress you with the wisdom of these reflections I am afraid my youth will not influence you."

She regarded me coolly, critically, I thought; then looked across the room. I followed her

glance. O’Kavanagh stood watching us with that odd, alert, vigilant air that was not jealousy.

“I commanded all those men who would have spoken to me to go away,” she said, “and leave me here alone for a time. Captain O’Kavanagh is my sentry. Did he speak to you?”

“Yes, bean-uasal, but did not forbid my advance.” I looked at her. “I should not have obeyed him had he ordered me back.”

“You were with Lady Honoria ——” she paused, and the next second rose to her feet with a quick gesture of surprise.

“Oh, how—how did he come here?” she exclaimed, “that boy of the Sassenaghs!”

I turned my head and saw Cole at the door. He looked at us, but was speaking to O’Kavanagh.

“He came here because we captured him,” I said. “I brought him to this house. He is on parole.”

She put her finger to her lip and looked down. Then she looked at me with eyes I could not read. After a moment she left my side and crossed the room, and I followed, wondering how much I knew of her mind.

Cole’s face lit up at her approach. But he acted with fine self-restraint, and waited for her to

notice him, thinking, no doubt, that she might not wish it to be known that they had met before. But the girl, to my surprise, showed no scruple about recognizing him, and greeted him with a bow. His eyes at once spoke to her, and she threw him a look of intelligence. I saw O'Kavanagh regard him the next instant from head to foot, so I knew that he also had intercepted that glance.

"Murrrough," she said in the careless tone of a child dismissing its playmate, "you need not be acting guard any longer. I have thought out all my thoughts and I want to laugh and dance now."

"Do you dance with Iveagh?" he asked, smiling, a slight restraint in his tone.

"Niall MacGuinness of Iveagh has not spoken a word about dancing to Ethne Ni Brien," she said charmingly, with a bright look from her eyes.

"Then ——" exclaimed O'Kavanagh, but I interrupted him.

"Ethne Ni Brien, will you dance with Niall MacGuinness?" I asked and offered her my arm. Cole, who had not understood our words, as we spoke in Irish, looked keenly at me and then at O'Kavanagh. She noted the glance and laughed.

"Sir," she remarked in English, addressing him,

"I see you are a prisoner, and sure I am sorry for you. After I have danced with my Lord Iveagh I will dance with you."

He bowed, but O'Kavanagh appeared ill pleased, and I led her away. She looked up in my face and smiled.

"How do you know," she said softly, "that it may not be my great-aunt with whom you are dancing?"

"I shall hold you fast, bean-uasal, so that you cannot turn into a cailleach (hag) or run away."

"Then it will be only the jade whom you will hold," she said in a low tone, as if to herself.

I felt ashamed at the rebuke, and as I looked at her began to think of her from a new point of view. She was true to her friendships, brave, daring, guileless and gentle. Her eyes gleamed like stars; I seemed to drink deep of a poppied draught every time I met them.

"Oh, now I must speak like your great-aunt again," I exclaimed. "There is shame on my head, bean-uasal."

She gave me a glance which I hoped meant that she had forgiven me, and we danced. But after a few moments she suddenly said she was tired, that she did not like the dance, and asked me to take

her away. I was leading her towards a room where refreshments were served when she told me somewhat peremptorily that she wished to return to the one we had left. At the same moment I saw the Duke of Berwick's aid-de-camp moving through the dancers as if in search of some one. My companion quickened her pace, and we passed into the smaller salon. O'Kavanagh had gone, but Cole still lingered by the door.

"Madam," he said, deference and admiration in his tone, "may I remind you of your promise and claim your hand?"

"Not yet, sir," she replied and passed on, clinging to my arm. "My lord," she whispered, "take me to some quiet spot where I can speak to you about—speak to you—yes, about the cross."

She stammered and her diffidence did not surprise me. Yet I had a feeling that she had not meant thus to end the sentence; that when she commenced to speak the cross had not been in her thoughts. As I glanced around for such a place as she desired a hand touched my shoulder and turning my head I saw the aid-de-camp.

"The Duke and M. de Boisseleau wish to see you," he said.

Ethne looked back. "At once, Captain Stuart?" she asked with dreamy eyes.

"I regret at once," said the officer bowing. "May I offer you my arm?"

"I am engaged to another gentleman," she replied, and, turning, smiled at Cole who had hung in our rear.

I left her with expressions of regret, giving her into Cole's charge. I felt certain that she had had some plan which the arrival of the aid-de-camp had spoiled. I wondered if Stuart had been unwillingly my good genius.

Leaving the salon, I went down a passage that led to the room in which the generals sat in council. Some news relating to the siege I supposed had brought them thus together. As I approached the door I saw O'Kavanagh leaning by the wall on the right. He straightened himself and stood in my path.

"Do you know why you are summoned?" he demanded, his eyes smiling and hard.

"No." I looked at him and recalled our interview some hours earlier.

"You are to give evidence against O'Brien."

"I shall not have much to say. He received me civilly."

"Niall, we have been friends from boyhood! Swear to the men gathered in council there," he pointed to the door, "that you have full proof of Manus O'Brien's loyalty when you went to Cloona. Swear this for the sake of our friendship."

"I cannot swear that I have proof," I answered, "for I have not. But (though if O'Brien is a traitor he deserves to be hanged) I can say that he met me with all politeness and made no resistance to our search."

"You will speak as if you believed him to be innocent?"

"By my soul, Murrough, that is a large demand. I will do what I can. But I will not lie."

I knew that it was Ethne's beauty that had made him her slave, that was influencing me, too; though I sought to deny it, O'Brien's infamy appeared less black because of her charm. Duty took a new form.

"I will trust you," he said, and moved aside.

I went to the door and knocked. Berwick's voice bade me enter, and, on obeying, I found myself in a small room with a shuttered window. A dozen candles in iron candelabra lit up the figures of five or six men.

The Duke lounged in a cushioned chair by the

window, his smooth, handsome, boy's face wearing a look of well-bred indifference. Self-control and power lay in the lines of his lips and in the keenness of his glance. Dressed in the height of fashion of King Louis's court, he looked a gallant young man.

Brigadier Maxwell, the Scotch Jacobite, and Brigadier Lutterel sat on his right, while Boisseleau paced up and down, his hands clasped behind his back. Sarsfield stood by the fireplace, holding himself erect, that bold look of confidence on his face that no adverse fortune seemed to lessen.

"Here is our man," said Boisseleau, stopping short and fixing eyes like gimlets on my face. I drew up and saluted the group.

All the men looked at me, and as I waited to be addressed I felt that something of importance was in hand.

"M. le General, you report well of this officer?" Boisseleau glanced at Sarsfield. "He served with you in Connacht."

"I give him a high character for bravery and skill," Sarsfield answered, "and that, Monsieur, I cannot give to Captain Purcell."

I glanced swiftly from face to face. Had that

rat Purcell been trying to injure me with these men? Yet what charge had he to make?

Boisseleau walked across the room, then turned and again regarded me fixedly. "You went by order to Cloona two nights ago," he remarked.

"Yes, M. le General," I answered, "to arrest a spy."

"Did the gentleman who resides there offer any resistance to this arrest?"

"None whatever. He offered to parade his household for my inspection."

"Had you met him before?"

"No, mon General."

"Then, M. le Capitaine, attend to this command. You are to take five troopers, ride to Cloona, and arrest Manus O'Brien."

I bowed, and the Duke of Berwick, who had been flicking his face languidly with a lace handkerchief, for the room was warm, sat up suddenly with alertness.

"You are to hang the fellow, my Lord Iveagh," he said. "And hang him without trial. I noticed you led your men well at the Boyne. His Majesty will expect you to do your duty here."

I bowed again, but said nothing. "The duty must be done at once," said Boisseleau. "You

must leave this house without attracting attention and ride without drawing rein to Cloona. Manus O'Brien saw the cavalry cross the Shannon, and rode to the enemy's camp. Fortunately he was not believed at first. Then the Prince of Orange heard his tale and sent a body of cavalry to bring up the guns."

I looked at Sarsfield. "Sir," I asked, "did the old woman Mor give the information?"

"We learned it from a spy in the Williamite camp," he answered. "His guilt is certain."

"Hang him at his own door," said Berwick, "that the countryside may know how His Majesty deals with traitors."

"Pardon me, Your Grace," said Sarsfield. "I advise less prompt measures. Let Iveagh bring him hither, and after trial he can be shot. He belongs to the princely house of Thomond."

A cold smile curled the Duke's lips. "In the midst of a siege! A mistaken mercy," he replied. "M. De Boisseleau, do you approve of this clemency?"

I saw Boisseleau did not, and I knew him to be a just and upright man. O'Brien's guilt was certain, and he deserved a short shrift. Yet my duty was detestable. I was to arrest and hang Ethne's

uncle, while the girl laughed and danced away that night, unaware of the tragedy that had befallen her house.

"M. le Duc and messieurs," said Boisseleau in the tone of a man resolute in his decision, "clemency with a traitor is ever a mistake. I agree with M. De Berwick that the sentence be carried out at once."

"Then, Lord Iveagh," said Berwick, "make what haste you can to Cloona, hang the traitor and report in the morning at the castle."

I saluted and turned to the door. For a minute I thought of refusing the task, but I recalled the peril of our position and remembered that had we not destroyed the guns Limerick would have fallen. By that act we had been given time to breathe, to strengthen our batteries and restore our walls. O'Brien deserved death.

As I strode up the passage I saw that O'Kavanagh had gone. I was glad of this, being in no mood just then to argue with a man whose reason had been silenced by love. The thought again flashed across my mind that Ethne was false to our side, that she had told her uncle the object of our ride.

A few minutes later my suspicions were strength-

ened. I had crossed the hall to a room opposite to the one in which the card players sat to get my cloak. As I entered the apartment I saw Ethne and Cole standing alone together. Her back was towards me, and as his eyes were on her face he did not notice my entrance.

"You must escape," said the girl, "and you will keep your promise and never betray that I told you this! You must escape now. Oh, sure, it is important. Get to your own camp and do this for me."

"I am on parole," began Cole, and looked up and saw me. The blood rushed to his face. His sudden start made her look round.

I felt turned to ice. Here was this lovely traitor abetting the escape of a man she had met but twice, abetting it that he might carry information to the enemy's camp. If I was to hang her uncle, in the name of heaven ought I not to arrest her?

My eyes must have told her my thoughts, for hers dropped before my gaze and her face grew pensive, taking that look of aloof loveliness that made a man think of his prayers. But I had hardened; duty, honor, the safety of the city were more to me than any woman's smiles.

"Pardon me," I said, "I have intruded. I have no doubt, madam"—I fixed my eyes on her face—"that you were proposing an escape to this gentleman in order to hear him refuse it."

I took up my cloak, beckoned to Cole, and turned to the door. There was a swift rustle of silk and I heard her follow.

"MacGuinness of Iveagh," she said, "wait!" Her tone was sweet, yet imperious, and I obeyed.

"Yes, I command you to wait," she said. "You shall not leave thinking this gentleman has forgotten his honor. He would not escape. I urged him very earnestly, but he would not escape. And now, Niall MacGuinness, take the cold eyes the north has given you from my face! It would be more manly if you spoke your thoughts and said I lied."

"Not for a moment do I think you have lied," I answered, bowing. "Not for a moment. I believe Lieutenant Cole had sufficient honor to refuse to carry your information—whatever it may be—to the Prince of Orange."

She looked at me wide-eyed for a moment then broke into a peal of laughter.

"I assure you," said Cole, proudly, "that the lady speaks the truth. I remembered my parole."

I bowed. "I accept your word, sir," I answered, "as I did last night."

He returned my bow. "And you will find that I have spoken the truth," he replied. "Both now and last night."

I looked at Ethne. "Your laugh is very pretty and infectious, bean-uasal," I said, "and I shall keep my northern eyes on the floor while you explain why you are interested in the escape of a prisoner whom you have met but twice."

She turned her face aside. "Pity is ever near a woman's heart," she replied. "And, I see, sir, that you have met some *sidhe* (fairy) of the glen."

I looked down, not sure what I ought to do. If she had been a man I should have put her under arrest and sent a report to Sarsfield. Being what she was, my duty seemed less obvious. Then recalling the order I had received, I turned abruptly and walked from the room. In the hall I sent a lackey to find my servant and as I waited by the door my glance fell on old Mor. On seeing me she left the crowd and drew near.

"A blessing to thee, Niall MacGuinness," she said brightly. "A blessing to thee! I would go into the house and look at the dancers. When I

was young it is many a boy and cailin I danced down. Ochon! that was long ago."

I gave her my hand and led her across the threshold. "I know the cailleach (old woman)," I said to one of the servants. "Let her stay."

"Och, a double blessing on thee, son of chiefs!" she exclaimed, and, drawing her hand from mine, went down the hall with the light, quick step that she had shown on the bog.

I turned again to the door, but could not see my servant, and went into the street, where I stood in the light thrown from the house. Presently I saw Galloping Hogan leave the crowd and come towards me, his hat in his hand.

"Your horse is at the end of the street, tigearna (lord)," he said. "It was frightened at the noise, and your servant holds it there."

I glanced at his face. He did not look as if he had come from a revel; his thin, bronzed cheeks were unflushed; the lurking twinkle in his eye was natural, not the result of deep draughts of uisgebach.

"The moon is bright," he added, "and I know the shortest road."

"I am going to the camp," I replied, and walked

towards where my horse was held. Hogan followed.

"You will want me, tigearna," he said, with a swift emphasis on his words.

I hesitated for a moment, then told him to come, and climbed into the saddle.

CHAPTER VI

WE broke into a trot when clear of the city and soon reached the cavalry camp. I chose five men of my own troop, and, without telling them whither I was going, led them slowly through the lines. Hogan, I guessed, knew the object of my ride, and as soon as we had passed the last patrol I told him that our destination was Cloona.

He said it was a right thing to punish those who had betrayed us to the enemy, so that I saw that my supposition was correct and that he was aware that I had received an order to hang O'Brien. I bade him ride in front and lead us to Cloona by the shortest route.

The night was clear, and the moon, drifting west, showed dim reaches of undulating land. As we advanced the silence of the night seemed to grow and gather round us like a wall. We rode by cottages that were as still as the grave, winding up slopes silent and stark in the moonlight, where our own and our horses' shadows followed us like some phantom escort. White mists rested

in patches on the bog-lands, giving a vague, uncertain look to the scene. Far off to the west the mountains were black against the sky, looking as if they held it and the stars.

Presently we left the road and crossed fields of ripening oats and empty pasture-lands, riding through the heathery outskirts of bogs, where the whistle of the curlew come along the night. We leaped wall and fence, following where Hogan led. But I did not press the pace; I hated my task. Now and again I hoped that Sarsfield's advice might prevail and that one would be sent to stay my hand. I was not sorry when Hogan's horse floundered into a marsh, and halted my party while he struggled through. Soon afterwards a trooper pointed to a horseman riding at a furious pace on our right. He was a field off, and I stood up in the stirrups to gaze. The man went at so reckless a stride that I knew that he must bear important news. I shouted, but the messenger tore on unheeding of my cry. Confident that he carried a reprieve, I gave the order to gallop, and we went forward at a pace that set our sabres dancing by our thighs. We had not gone fifty yards when Hogan's bay shied and plunged against her right-hand man, bringing

horse and rider to the ground. A broken girth was the result and a sprained foot. We raised the trooper, mended his girth and put him on his saddle, but the delay had caused us to lose some time. The orderly was out of sight and the moon waning.

As we left the meadow and filed into the borean the darkness increased. By the time we reached the gate it had fallen round us like a pall. A wind rippled the lake, rustling the leaves of the trees, filling the air with vague mournful sounds. The lake and avenue were indistinguishable from each other in the shadow of the elms. My eyes raked the gloom for the horseman, but the strange rider was not in sight. The lapping of the inky water, the rustling of the foliage and the rattle of a bridle chain filled the pause while I gazed. The gate stood open, and ordering the troopers to close up, I told them the order that I had received and then rode forward.

We advanced some yards before the house became dimly visible ahead. Detaching two men to guard the rear, I rode to the front, followed by Hogan and the three troopers. Bright lights shone suddenly in the lower windows, and the hall door was thrown open as we

drew near. A flood of light whitened the ground to the edge of the lake, and a dark figure shot into the gleam. I rode up to the man, who bowed low.

"Welcome and welcome forever," he said, "both your men and yourself, Taoiseach (officer). My master is within and would see you."

"Has a trooper arrived from Limerick?" I asked.

"A horseman came and has gone, whither it is not for me to say."

I dismounted and told two of my men to follow me. On entering the house I saw a brightly lighted room on the left, and walked towards it. The open door enabled me to see into a large apartment with old yet handsome furniture, and I caught a view of a table laden with food and wine. Bidding the troopers wait at the door, I went in.

The man whose life I had come to take sat in a high-backed chair, and rose as I crossed the threshold. He was handsomely dressed in a gray silk coat embossed with gold thread, silk breeches and hose, and his periwig appeared freshly curled. One of his hollow cheeks had a fresh gash from a blunt razor; his eyes were cool yet furtive, his

chin protruded so that his long thin neck had something the appearance of a cock's stretched out to crow. He held himself with a stoop. Bowing courteously, he invited me to a seat as if not noticing the gravity of my air.

"Sir," I said, without returning the bow, "I arrest you as a traitor in the name of King James."

He thrust his face towards me with an air of attention, but his hand went to his side. He did not carry a rapier, and the action must have been involuntary. A thin smile spread over his lips.

"This is an unpleasant duty, young gentleman," he said, "and may be serious for both of us. I think I recognize your face, my Lord Iveagh. You were here two or three nights ago."

I took no notice of the speech, but looked across my shoulder and signaled to the troopers. They came in and I told them to arrest O'Brien. As the men advanced to obey he retreated to the opposite side of the table.

"Listen to me, Lord Iveagh," he called out in a loud, steady tone. "I am defenseless, as you see, my servants are unarmed, and I am a man fifty years of age. Am I to be taken to Limerick?"

The soldiers moved slowly forward, one on

each side of the table. I met the keen, questioning eyes fixed upon me; the thin face showed no fear.

"I do not take you to Limerick," I replied, and paused. "If you wish for a priest, send for one."

He gave me a sudden ferocious, wolflike look. "I understand you, young man," he said. "I am to be shot and that at once. By Heaven I make a mistake. I see a rope in this soldier's hand. My lord, I am an innocent man!"

The troopers grasped him by his arms and bound his hands. He made no resistance, looking even dignified in his bonds. After a few moments he spoke with calmness.

"I submit to my fate," he said. "Word reached me that my enemies had slandered my honor. My lord, I pray you as an honorable gentleman to defer my execution till the messenger whom I have sent into Limerick returns."

"I am afraid," I replied, "that your messenger goes on a fruitless errand. You betrayed General Sarsfield's movements to the Prince of Orange, an act which cost some brave lives. The Duke of Berwick and M. de Boisseleau in council have decreed your death. And I am sent hither, sir, to execute their order."

There was a pause ; the gaunt figure between the men swayed a little. Yet the man showed no trace of fear, looking, indeed, with great coolness about him.

“My lord,” he said, with the careless ease of one asking a friend to dine, “it is now somewhat past three of the clock, and my messenger will be back by sunrise. I have sent him to my niece, Ethne Ni Brien, who will at my request approach the Duke of Berwick in order that I may be brought to Limerick and receive a fair trial. For I can bring witnesses who will acquit me of the charge some dastard has laid against me. The Duke is young, my lord, and report speaks not indifferent to beauty, so that I have some reason to hope that if you will delay carrying your order into effect I shall not need the rope—one of my own, I think—which your Sergeant holds in his hand.”

I turned aside to think over his words before I answered him. It was possible that the Duke might yield to Ethne’s pleading, for he was twenty and she was lovely. O’Brien’s messenger could return within two hours if he spurred fast. If she failed to procure a reprieve I should still have time to hang O’Brien and be able to report the

execution of my order before noon. Then I remembered the rider who had outridden us.

The thought made me swing sharply round on my heel. "A trooper from the city has been here," I said, looking at my prisoner.

He nodded his head twice. "True; it is true," he replied.

The idea of treachery sprang to my mind. Some one who had learned my errand had spared neither spur nor bit to warn O'Brien. I thought of Purcell.

"He came to warn you and bid you flee." I regarded him keenly.

"He brought an order, my lord, for you to stay execution till a patrol arrived." O'Brien fixed his gaze upon me as he spoke.

"Then, by God, why did you not show it to me?" I exclaimed. "I have no wish to hang you before your time."

O'Brien moved his feet, a trick he seemed to have, swaying slightly again. He gave a short, unpleasant laugh.

"If I could not move you to pity," he replied, "I meant to tell you this, young man. But the trooper brought no written order, and would not stay when I entreated him to await your coming.

I doubted whether you would accept my word. I thought of escape, but I am a loyal gentleman, and what refuge dare I seek ! So, my lord, aware of my loyalty, I chose to await your arrival, sending, indeed, to my niece, believing in the wisdom and justice of James Stuart's son."

There appeared to be truth in his words, and I determined to defer the execution till his messenger returned. He bowed when I told him my decision.

"I have no desire to find death," he remarked, with a somewhat grim smile. "It is a country still some years' journey from me, I hope. My Lord Iveagh, you have acted as I hoped, indeed, believed, you would do." He bowed again and after a vain effort to straighten his shoulders, suddenly sighed and looked on the ground.

I told the men to lead him to the hall and put him in a small room with one window, which I saw was secured on the outside. A shower of rain came on violently at the same moment, and sending our horses to the rear, I stationed the rest of the troopers in the hall. I did not see Hogan and supposed that he was attending to his own animal.

On returning to the apartment in which I had

arrested O'Brien, I found his servant had placed a chair at the table. He begged me with effusive politeness to sit down and eat. I made no answer, and after lingering a few moments he went into the hall.

Soon afterwards I heard a sound as of something being wheeled across the flags. Going to the door I saw that he had placed a table before my men and was putting a large bowl of uisgebach upon it. The troopers' eyes gleamed thirstily, but I did not approve of this hospitality, and stepping forward took the bowl and threw it on the flags. Then I turned to my crestfallen men.

"Look, lads!" I said. "I do not wish you to drink anything in this house. You shall each have a noggin' of uisgebach when we return to camp. Sergeant, keep the men sober—where is Hogan?"

"I do not know, sir," the man answered; he turned to one of the troopers. "MacNamara, have you seen him?" he asked.

"He went to feed his horse," the soldier replied. "We have not seen him since."

I knew that the Rapparee took the greatest care of his bay, as his life often depended upon its wind and stride; so leaving the men cheered, I

hoped, by my promise, I returned to the dining-room. Pacing up and down for a time, I thought over my leniency to O'Brien, regarding it from several points of view. I recalled Boisseleau's stern tone; Berwick's scorn at the suggestion of delay; Sarsfield's reference to Purcell. Purcell had tried to slander me; this thought became a conviction. By not obeying the generals I had perhaps placed a weapon in the man's hand. Yet, humanity, even the plausibility of the story of the orderly, had made me pause. I did not care to confess that I was also influenced by a woman's beauty. In my heart I feared I was.

The rain beat violently against the windows, and I heard the sound of water pouring loudly from a gutter. Through the closed door I caught the voices of the troopers. One of them presently broke into song, a song of love. He sang:

Mo grad, on' si mo grad.
An bean is mo bios 'g am' grad
Is annsa i o m' deanam tinn
Ma an bean do m' deanam slan.

I turned and my eyes fell on a woman's glove lying on a cushion. I went towards it slowly. For a moment I traced with my eye the shape of the

hand that had worn it before I raised the glove. Half cynically I put it to my lips, thinking that the pretty false Ethne had left it there. A heavy perfume hung round the embroidered leather. It seemed to master my senses ; my blood warmed. I put the glove against my breast and drew nearer the table. Almost mechanically I took up a silver tankard of wine and filled a goblet. I placed it to my lips, drank, then started and flung it down.

For a minute I stood staring at the broken glass, the red stain on the floor. The thought struck me, clear, cold, ominous, that it had been wiser if I had left the wine untouched. With a slow step I turned and walked to the unshuttered window. It was pitch dark without and the wind wailed across the lake. Dense shadow seemed to move before the panes and a deep tolling sounded in my ears. I sank on a chair ; knew dreamily that my hand sought for the glove and found it, then with a last gleam of consciousness I hurled it from me.

A gray, depressing light filled the room when I awoke. I tried to rise at the sound of voices, but found myself unable to move. Presently I saw that my hands were bound, and felt the pressure of a rope around my arms and neck and waist.

The mist cleared in an instant from my brain ; I stared around. A file of soldiers in unfamiliar uniform stood by the door, and O'Brien, courteous, steady-eyed, was filling a tankard with wine for an officer in Lanier's dragoons.

The sight filled me for a minute with a choking sense of rage. I had been tricked and drugged, and the messenger had summoned an English patrol. I stiffened in my bonds, my eyes must have blazed. But I cooled presently, aware that wrath was useless, that fortune's wheel had turned and that I was a prisoner. My gaze rested on my captors ; I wished the rope was round O'Brien's neck, that he swung a corpse outside.

"Taste this muscatel, Captain," he said. "The wine that was popped for our friend is removed. It has a fine flavor. Let me refill your glass."

But the officer a tall, fair man, wiped his lips with a lace-edged handkerchief and shook his head.

"We have no time to lose," he answered. "As it is, the ride has carried some risk with it. And I doubt, sir, whether my colonel would have run the chance of his men being cut off if you had not mentioned that you had important tidings. He will be little pleased when I bring him back

but an officer and five drunken men." Then, swinging around, he noticed me.

"Good lud!" he said, frowning, "take that rope from that gentleman's neck."

"It is the one he would have hung me with," said O'Brien grimly. "I have let him feel it on his throat." He turned to his servant and ordered his horse, then fastened a heavy belt round his waist.

The officer had clattered to the door, but stopped suddenly as if he had forgotten something.

"Who warned you?" he demanded, looking back.

O'Brien swung a cloak over his shoulders before he answered. I listened expecting to hear Purcell's name. "It was a friend in the Irish camp, Captain," he said. "A young man betrothed to my niece."

"His name?" replied the dragoon. "If the officers are ready to become our spies, the first breach in the walls will bring the rest of the vagabonds to their knees."

O'Brien turned and looked at me. I met his scrutiny coolly, though I knew now that it was not Purcell's name that he was about to give. It

was O'Kavanagh's; O'Kavanagh! dead to duty, honor, Ethne's victim.

"I will tell the name to the King," he said, and walked towards the door. They went out, and after a brief interval two dragoons entered the room and, cutting my cords, led me out of the house.

The rain still fell, coming along the edge of the west wind in a slanting drizzle. A band of white light lay trailed against the horizon in the east, with gray masses of clouds floating towards it and hiding the summit of the mountains. Twenty troopers were drawn upon the lawn, their horses showing signs of having been ridden hard. My own men, drunk and bound, were slung each behind a saddle, but Hogan was gone. My guard ordered me to mount and, riding one on each side of me, led my horse by ropes attached to the bridle. The captain, who had already mounted, asked O'Brien to guide his party to the bridge by the shortest route. I heard him reply in his calm, courteous tone that it was his intention to do so, as parties of Rapparees were in the neighborhood, and, immediately placing himself at the head of the dragoons, he rode by the upper end of the lake.

Having left the water in our rear, we entered a

pass between the hills. I saw that the Captain was no fool and rode warily, throwing out flankers. My hopes of rescue diminished, but I nevertheless kept an alert lookout for my friends. The crests of the hills on each side were hidden by gray-brown clouds that crept along the ridges, beneath which came the steady sheet of fine rain. A flock of seagulls passed like shadows through the white mist, winging in from the rough weather that was beating across the Atlantic. Before long a scout returned to report the presence of a body of men at the end of the pass, whereupon the Captain called a halt and took council with O'Brien. He spoke sharply, evidently angry at having ventured his men for so little; but his frown lessened when a second scout brought in the news that it was a hundred Rapparees, not regular soldiers, that held the outlet. I hoped he would try to cut his way through, believing that I should then escape. But, to my disgust, he listened to O'Brien's advice and led us up the hill on the left. Here we were completely hidden in the mist, and, feeling our way along the ridge, rode down the other side, where, the dragoons setting spurs to their horses, we went at a gallop to the bridge.

By the time we drew rein I had made up my mind that should I be offered parole I would refuse it. To remain inactive while the siege continued did not suit my purpose. I longed, too, to stand in the breach, to take a man's part in the defense. As I sat for five minutes in the rain while the captain made his report to his colonel I formed one or two plans which, if I had luck, would enable me to escape. I was aroused from my thoughts by O'Brien riding up to my side. The water dripped from his face, his greatcoat of frieze was beaded with drops of rain, the deep collar hid the neck that had escaped my rope.

"My lord," he said, addressing me in English, "the chill of this ride has abated the heat with which—being fond of my life—I had regarded you. Moreover, I see that you did not like your task. You listened to my petition and I am free and you are a prisoner. Young man"—he looked at me gravely and paused for a moment—"your side will lose. You and your children will be exiles, while my descendants will rise to honor and acquire titles. Change your faith, serve the Dutch King and keep your lands."

I made no answer, but my eyes, I think, told him my thoughts. He was about to move on,

then something made him check his horse. "You have a foe," he said with a widening of the lips, so that his gums showed. "Your honor is in his hand. Come with me to William and make your peace."

I looked him again in the face, and, reading my answer there, he nodded, shrugged his shoulders, muttered something about a fool and rode on. At the same moment the Captain came out of the tent and called a sergeant, to whom he gave an order. The man mounted his horse and, bidding my guard go on, followed a yard in our rear.

We kept the bank of the river, the horses pushed to a trot. I looked back once; the Sergeant sat stiff and grim in the saddle, his weather-reddened nose just showing above the high collar of his cloak; a taciturn, gloomy man. The troopers who had hoped that their duty of guarding me would have ended at the bridge rode in angry silence by my side. I spoke once and was answered by an oath. I thought again of escape. Their horses were wearied from the rapid ride, the Sergeant alone being mounted on a fresh animal. But my roan had come far, too, and, moreover, the ropes held him fast. I looked at the river, but the carbines would find me there, even

if I succeeded in getting to the water before the guard fired.

I resigned myself to my fate for the moment, and we trotted on by the bank. The Shannon was in flood and the noise of the water was like the sea on the shingles. Through the veil of rain the white and brown rapids showed vaguely—a sombre, angry burden of waters. When within a mile of the city the Sergeant rode to the front and led us into a breen that ran to the rear of the English camp. This was to avoid the provision wagons and their guards, which were wending along the more direct route.

It was past noon when we entered the camp and halted in the quarters of the Grenadiers. The Sergeant bade the guard wait, and left us sitting in our saddles. The destruction of the guns had caused dismay and anger, and unfriendly faces met my gaze. The men, dressed in red and yellow uniforms, with coped fur caps, moved past with a tinkling of bells which puzzled me till I saw that they hung at their belts. This was to frighten cavalry, I concluded, and thought it a foolish plan. After a longer interval than I liked had passed the Sergeant came back and we were again set in motion. We wound behind the lines of the Dutch

and English foot, passing Ireton's Fort, which was within the range of the Huguenot and Danish sentries.

Suddenly the Sergeant halted us, and I saw a knot of horsemen approaching. In the centre was a thin man with brilliant eyes and an aquiline nose. I gazed with interest at the sombre face framed in the big periwig, saluting when he looked at me.

"Is that the officer?" I heard him say, and without waiting for an answer the Prince rode up to where I sat with my guards.

"You have come over to my side, sir," he said abruptly. "I have no enmity with your people. For your party to look to France is folly."

Without giving me time to reply, he went on, speaking in a sharp rapid tone. "What is the state of the city, your ammunition, the spirit of the garrison? General Sarsfield is the only officer of merit you possess. Berwick is a boy; Boisse-leau knows little of war."

I saw that he took me for some traitor within our lines, and thought it possible that he believed I was O'Brien, but this idea was dispelled the next second.

"The gentleman who warned me that Sarsfield

has crossed the Shannon mentioned your name as one who would supply information. Speak, sir," the Prince concluded harshly, "and answer my questions."

"Your Highness"—he frowned at the address, and I went on—"you mistake me for some traitor. I am a prisoner, and not an informer."

He regarded me with angry eyes for a second before he turned to the general on his right. What he said was spoken in too low a tone for me to catch, and a minute later at a sign from one of the staff the sergeant led me away.

Our route, once we were clear of the camp, lay again by the river, and I busied myself during the ride in guessing the name of the traitor. Sometimes I thought of Purcell, sometimes of one or other of the officers of the new levies, but could not decide upon the man. At the end of four miles we turned into a pass leading to a castle. It was a strong fortress with towers, built on a rock, surrounded by stout walls and containing, the Sergeant told me, deep sunk vaults. After he had answered the challenge at the gates we were admitted into the courtyard, where the officer of the guard examined a paper that the Sergeant gave him.

I was ordered to dismount, and obeyed, hungry and tired. The gate stood open, and in the pause my eyes wandered towards it. At the same moment a young woman entered the courtyard, passing the sentry unchallenged. Her garments were spattered with mud and her face seemed not unknown to me. She walked with the air of one who thought well of her charms, swinging her muddy skirts, putting her head on one side, smiling and rolling her eyes. The men looked at her impudently, their tongues alone kept silent by the presence of their officer.

As her eyes fell on me she gave a cry of recognition and advanced in my direction. "Oh, sir," she exclaimed, clasping her hands together, "you will aid a solitary female? Have you forgotten me? Alack! I fear you have. We met that night at the forge when those wild men held me a prisoner. Something sent you away in a hurry before you could liberate me. I am looking for my man, whom I am told is here."

Her rapid movement took my guards by surprise. I looked at the simpering face, the china blue eyes raised towards me, and answered that I was a prisoner and could not help her, and that she must apply to the officer in command for the

information she required. His attention at the same moment was directed towards us, and he demanded who had brought the woman into the courtyard. The sentry replied that she had passed before he could prevent her, and the woman, hearing the inquiries, went towards him and courtesied.

"I thought that handsome young gentleman yonder was an officer, sir," she said, perking her head on one side. "Pray can you tell me where is my husband, Ephraim Hinks? My uncle, the barber-surgeon, often told me that I might have looked higher than Master Hinks——"

The officer turned abruptly from her, and ordered two men to take me into the castle. I looked back as I entered the doorway and saw him speaking to the woman. A shriek followed his words, she threw up her arms and fell backward. The next second I was led down a gloomy, narrow passage, and saw no more of the pair. I was brought before a second officer, who asked if I would accept parole, adding that it would be for my interest to come over to their side. I declined to take parole, and ignored his last remark. Thereupon, I was taken through several passages, all dusty and dark, to a room with one window set high in the wall, unglazed and barred with iron.

When alone, I swung up to it by laying my hands on the sill and looked out. It commanded a view of the Shannon, here tidal, and the Clare hills. These showed dimly through the mist, their crests hidden. As I gazed the door opened and a soldier bearing food came in.

"No, no, Mr. Officer," he grinned, "though, damn me, you are a poor lot of officers. We made you show your heels at the Boyne. No, no, those bars are strong, and the rock is steep, and a ball from the sentinel on the rampart will carry good night for you, if your head goes out too far."

I dropped on the ground, and leaning by the wall surveyed the man. The square bulldog chin, the truculent look, the voice, told me that my warder was he who had fled in terror from an owl three nights before.

"Your name is Hinks," I said. He placed the dish noisily on the table and looked at me.

"Who told you that?" he asked with an oath.

"You had charge of a woman three nights ago," I continued, not noticing his question. "Your sergeant, in defiance of orders, had seized her."

His jaw dropped. "Who told you this?" he repeated. "Woodhouse is dead."

"It was three nights ago." I spoke slowly and he eyed me from the corners of his lids.

"Three nights ago! Three months ago! Three years ago! Damn you! What are you at all?" he asked, speaking rapidly, angrily, but with fear, too, I thought.

"I am but an inquirer, Master Hinks," I replied, studying his face. "Now, what frightened you, a stout soldier, when one sprang over the orchard wall?"

He grew a sickly yellow under his bronzed skin, and regarded me with a fierce, searching gaze. Then, with a volley of oaths, he turned and strode from the room.

Two hours later he came back and hung a lantern on the wall, casting sidelong suspicious glances upon me as he moved about. He did not speak, and I kept silent.

The next morning my breakfast was brought by another soldier, a good-natured, apple-faced lad, who had a great deal to say. He told me the castle was garrisoned by half a company of Kirke's Foot, who had taken possession of it two days before. I asked him about the woman who

had come into the courtyard, inquiring why she had screamed. He answered that the captain had told her that her husband was dead.

"But Hinks is alive," I said; "he was in this room last night."

"There were two of 'em," he replied. "Two Hinks, brothers. Both with tempers best left alone. When we were in Schomberg's army we starved and rotted and died, and a man took what the devil gave. Now the King looks after us and feeds us, and hangs us, too, if we want to do our devil's dance. Ephraim Hinks was the worst; a sour thief with a great slash across his face. He'd have been swinging on the gallows by this if a ball from a battery had not sent him to hell. He died the night your Sarsfield—damn him!—blew up our guns."

When alone I reflected for a time upon this speech, then suddenly hope rose, and I saw a chink in my prison walls. It was Ephraim Hinks's body that I had seen in the orchard, dead, not from a musket ball, but from the thrust of a dirk. The brothers had quarreled and one had taken the other's life.

But Hinks did not visit me again and the days passed monotonously. I could hear the booming

of guns and knew that a fresh battering train must have been brought up to the enemy's camp. Impatient, anxious, I spent the time pacing my room or looking from the window. The level ground was many feet below me, the castle being perched upon a rock, and escape by the window was impossible.

One morning, sick of listening to the guns, I turned to the young soldier who still brought me my food and questioned him for news. He replied that our batteries were being silenced and that it was expected that the breach would soon be large enough for the stormers to cross. This was disheartening tidings, and perhaps my face showed my thoughts, for the lad changed the conversation. An old woman, he said, had hung about the gate the previous evening and would not go away. She could only speak in Irish and was a witch, he thought. None of his companions could understand her words, but a man who came up with some mules interpreted them for their amusement.

"She was a-telling," he said, "of a witch called Beamon who lived here when there was no Christ in the land and no castle on the rock. And such was her deviltry that she burnt a candle every night, and if a man looked at it, he was dead by

morning. So we called her by the bloody hag's name, and the sergeant of the guard haled her in, and she'll be tried when the officer awakes."

It was clear to me that Mor had wandered to the castle. I wondered if she knew I was in it, and had some plan for my escape. When the lad came again at noon he supplemented his story with news that once more aroused hope in my heart.

"The hag has been a-doing that that I warrant will land her at the stake," he remarked. "She speered the future for Hinks and ten others, till the officer had her clapt up. Some of us believed her, but some laughed. And Hinks believed her worst of all, and some of her devilment she whispered in his ear. May I rot! but 'twas a sight to make a man burst with laughing to see him leaping across the yard, crying out for her to be burnt or broke on the wheel!"

I climbed again to the window when the lad left the room, and looked out across the Shannon. Some seagulls moved on the opposite bank, the green fields, the mountains were lit up by a gleam of sunlight that had broken between the clouds.

CHAPTER VII

MY hope became a certainty when next morning Hinks, not the lad, entered the room. He set the food on the table and walked to the door. There he paused, standing with his back towards me.

"D'ye wish to be sent to Limerick?" he said, sullenly, after a minute's silence.

I made no reply, appearing as if I had not heard him.

"D'ye want to escape?" he whispered hoarsely, and turned sharply on his heel. His thin shaven lips snapped together; he gave me a keen, furtive look.

"Yes, and you, Master Hinks, have to help me," I replied, speaking with coolness, though the prospect of freedom was stirring the blood in my veins.

He walked forward and leaned one hand on the table. "Aye, have I?" he said with an attempt to jeer. "Look ye here! ye leader of scarecrows, ye might have rotted and died before I'd have

helped ye yesterday ! But to-day I will if you have anything to pay me with. 'Swounds ! but I will ! ”

“ I have but an empty belt,” I returned. “ But, nevertheless, Hinks, you have to help me to escape.”

He swore. “ Ye'll let me know why,” he said with an insolent air, but his eyes watched me with a lowering, expectant look, like a man who anticipates a blow.

“ I shall,” I said, and fixed my eyes on his face. “ You have to help me because the spirit of Ephraim Hinks leaped into the lane when you held the woman.”

His face grew gray-green in the early light ; his stare was murderous. I went on, watching him, for I expected him to strike.

“ And the body of your brother lay in the orchard with your dirk thrust in the breast. You had murdered him, Master Hinks ! ”

He did not speak for a few moments, his gaze on my face. “ You saw him ? ” he said at last hoarsely.

I smiled, but made no answer. The next instant he drew his dirk. “ Rot me ! ” he said in a low, ferocious tone, “ if I do not do for you ! ”

I sprang to my feet and seized the chair. "Stand!" I said in a voice of command. The instinct of discipline made him obey; he stood still with uplifted weapon, his furious eyes fixed upon me. "Understand!" I continued, seeing that I held him in mastery for a moment, "that if you kill me, you will be hung. It is no business of mine to report your murder to your officers. But it is your business to get me out of this fortress. If you do not obey the witch, her master, the devil, and yours may think his account has run long enough with you."

The man's hand fell slowly to his side. "I'm christened churchman," he said sullenly, "not a hell-bound Papist." But his fury was spent, and fear held him in thrall; his eyes fell. With lowered head he resheathed his dirk, and turned to the door. There he stood for a minute.

"I'll be sentinel at twelve of the clock to-night," he muttered. "Be ye ready when I knock."

He went out, and the door clanged behind him. I hoped that Mor's spell would force him to keep his word. The thought of liberty made my heart light; I saw myself again among my comrades, a sword in my hand, my foot in the breach. I felt even pity for O'Kavanagh; I planned a speech,

kindly, yet full of friendly warning ; I pictured him listening, repentant, promising to break with Ethne. And my fancy placed me in her presence ; the eye of my mind discerned the scene that followed with peculiar clearness. I told her things with manly frankness ; I touched her young soul. Then, in my paces to and fro in my room, I seemed to have a vision. She grew from a maid, young and mortal, into a woman of the sidhe, one of the visitants from the raths and mountain heights, mysterious as the golden-haired Sabia whom Finn MacCool met on Slicoenaman. About her head floated the birds of Angus og, the three kisses that the young god changed into visible form, and her inscrutable eyes dwelt upon me for a moment before the magic door in the mountain opened and she vanished from my sight. " Ah, my grief ! " I thought. " I am but a man, after all ! "

Later my musings changed. I counted the sound of the guns, impatient, a prey to doubt. Would the rascal without keep his promise, would fear make him open my prison door ? Suddenly the key turned in the lock and a sinewy hand thrust a cloak through the opening ; then a dish containing food was laid on the floor, and the door

was closed and secured. I ate, assured now of his help, the sight of the cloak removing my doubts. No one came near me again, and the long hours of the day dragged on. At last the sun set, the shadows filled my room and darkness fell. I heard voices and laughter in the room overhead, chairs drawn about and the deep tones of a singer. There was revelry among the officers and I was glad of the fact. Near midnight I looked from the window; no moon showed and clouds sailed over the stars. The river lay black between its banks; the dark hills beyond it looked as if they had mysteries old as Ireland in the deep shadows of the slopes.

I cloaked myself and waited for the signal. The noise in the upper room increased and in spite of my watching the key had turned in the lock before I knew it. Hinks looked in and beckoned. As I crossed the threshold the thought flashed through my mind that he meant to play me false, and direct the fire of the sentry when I reached the courtyard. If such were his plan, I hoped, however, to defeat it and escape in the dark.

There was faint light in the passage as I left my cell. Hinks secured the door, took the lantern

from the wall and walked on ahead without speaking a word. We turned into a second passage, and after many windings reached a door clamped with rusty iron, worm-eaten from age and thick with dust. Hinks drew back two heavy bolts, lit a torch and thrust it into my hand. "Go down the steps," he said, with more civility than he had yet addressed me. "There is an opening at the end, and make ye for the river."

I went through the doorway and heard the bolts replaced. Looking before me, I found myself in a short passage at the end of which was a second door, as time-worn as the one through which I had passed. The noises that the rusty bolt made as I drove it back filled me with fear lest it should reach the ears of the garrison. At my feet lay a stone stair leading into profound darkness. The blackened, dank walls caught the smoke from my torch as I went down. A chill, damp air met my face, blowing back the flame, and I knew that I must be going into the very depths of the rock. The tread of my descending feet, with their tinkle of steel, sounded to me loudly in the silence between the walls. As I went still lower I kept expecting that silence to

break, as if other ears listened to my steps and strange eyes saw and a warning cry trembled on unseen lips. My ears, too, were strained for the sound of the guns. I know not why, unless, having heard them all day, the absence of the ominous booming made me fear (though I knew it was but a fear) that the city had been stormed and my friends slain.

Then, all in a moment, the air grew fresher, and the torch flickered till the flame flew back like a fiery tongue into the darkness behind. An open space, wide, dark, void, spread before my feet. I sprang to the ground, and the light, dancing around, showed me the wet rocks and fern-clad sides of a cave. I went on a few paces; then, seeing a narrow fissure on the right, put out the torch and went towards it with a light step. At the same instant a figure darkened the opening, and a voice called out:

“Is that you, Hinks?”

I drew up swiftly. The exit was guarded, and it was here that Hinks meant me to meet my death. I gazed round in the dark remembering that I had seen some loose pieces of rock before I extinguished the torch. Then, as it was probable that another sentry was within hail, I trusted to

the darkness and my luck to pass the man undiscovered, and, pulling my cloak around me, went boldly forward.

"Hinks is on duty," I said, roughly, as the sentry peered at me. "I am an orderly from the camp."

"An orderly from the camp!" he eyed me still closer. "What brings you by this way at this hour?"

I laughed. "Oh," I exclaimed, "if you must know, comrade, you must. It is a lass. The lass Hinks was after, a wench that pleased Ephraim."

The man's tone changed; it lost its suspicious note. "Ephraim's wife?" he said. "A comely bit. I saw her leave this old nest at dusk. 'Tis said the Captain ordered her to go. I wager my life it won't be long till she forgets Ephraim."

"He had a keen eye for plunder and a black tongue," I said, advancing.

"Yea, true," replied the sentry, and I walked by him with the air of one going about his duty.

I had gone some yards, and thought myself safe when he suddenly called out, bidding me stop. His tone told that his suspicions were renewed, and I dashed towards a small wood. A

shot followed, missing me in the dark. The next moment there were shouts from the line of sentries, a clatter of arms, and a discharge of snaphances. Running among the trees, I soon reached the open ground. As I crossed the field I heard the guard racing down the steep hill from the castle and leaping over a wall. I tore on to the river. The tide was ebbing; I flung off my boots and jumped into the flood. The black water opened, and I shot down into a forest of weeds. A choking horror seized me as I felt the long rope swaying, fearing that I should be held. But the reeds parted, touched and floated off, pulling no death bonds around my body.

I heard the men shout as I rose to the surface and struck out for the middle of the stream. A shot tore up the water by my side; another whistled over my head. But the darkness of the night soon hid me from those on the bank as the tide bore me swiftly forward. Turning my head towards the Clare side of the Shannon, I swam on, struggling with the force of tide and current, and eventually reached the bank which rose a few feet above my head. A clump of alders on the top trailed their branches over the bank, and, seizing one, I drew myself on land. Then drop-

ping exhausted on the ground, I lay there careless of my fate.

The night darkened as the clouds thickened, and some drops of rain fell on my face. The tall reeds around me hid all but the sky, where a black veil of vapor had been drawn across moon and stars. In the inertia of mind and body the actual and the unreal touched, blended and became as one. The river to my drowsy ears carried sounds that were like half smothered voices charged with fateful messages; gurgling whispers from drowning men, where the water lapped by the alder root. A faint breeze rustled the reeds, which bent and sighed above me. I felt myself for the moment cut off, as it were, from life, permitted to look at it with the eyes of those who were freed from the flesh. The passion and stir of living receded across the dim gray land through which I gazed. Love, ardor, hopes, flitted pale shades before my mind. What value did they hold? White stars that dimmed and passed; seen, desired, forgotten. Suddenly something seemed to seize me by the throat, to grasp my heart. The chill of my body became as fire, my blood leapt. I sat up and stared to the north. A light had sped across the sky, white, swift, gone

in a second. A mortar! And as I looked another followed and then another. I sprang to my feet and began to battle through the reeds, calling out in the sudden rage that had seized me, a rage that I was not there, in Limerick, fighting by my comrades' side.

After a time I knew I was clear of the tangle of brush, grass and weeds, and went up some ascending ground. The death messenger that had whitened the sky had called me from the land of inertia, dreams and darkness in which physical exhaustion had flung me. To be in the flesh, to be strong, to be young, made one magnificent fact.

My excitement lessened as I climbed the hillside, the water was trailing from my clothes, my feet were unshod, the night at its blackest hour, the country unknown. These things made me direct my steps towards a light that glimmered high up on the slope. It shone, I found, through the windows of an ancient ruined church, surrounded by graves. A skull that stood on the sill glistened in the ray. A thick vegetation of nettles and weeds grew between the graves, hiding pitfalls into which I once or twice stumbled.

Approaching the windows, I looked in. A man in a red coat and green breeches knelt by a fire watching a rabbit that hung from a stick. He carried no weapon, and as he turned his face I saw that it was Cole.

In a moment he was on his feet. After one swift glance round the ruin he darted to the broken archway and vanished into the night. I knew he thought I was in command of a patrol and expected to be recaptured. I went round to the archway and called out. There was no answer, and I entered the ruin and warmed myself by the fire.

Two facts now confronted me: the first, Cole had broken his parole; the second, that Ethneog was a traitor within our camp. There could be no question about my duty after this incident; I must tell Sarsfield what I had learned.

The smell of the roasting rabbit presently drew my attention to my own physical condition. I was hungry; and, as I had captured the enemy's camp, the rabbit was my prey. Yet I hesitated, having a fancy to find Cole, invite him to the feast and question him about Ethne.

I left the fire, enveloped in the steam that the heat had drawn from my clothes, and went to the

archway. I stood and listened for a moment. Far down the slope I thought I heard the sound of footsteps; then I turned and saw Cole's face above the skull as he eyed me through the window.

He nodded jerkily. "I see that you are unarmed and alone," he said, flinging his words somewhat defiantly at me. "So am I."

"Having broken your parole, sir," I remarked.

He flushed and swore. "You should not say that twice if I had a sword," he said. "No, not twice! I gave up my parole because M. de Boisseleau would not suffer me to be exchanged, as I had seen too much of the defenses."

"I can hear your story better by the fire," I replied. "Come in." He glanced at me for a moment, then his face left the window, and I heard him stumbling over the gravestones. Presently his figure appeared in the archway, and, crossing the flags and grass, he joined me at the fire.

We divided the rabbit between us and ate in silence. When our meal was over I stared into the flame, knowing that he would not betray Ethne. I believed that he was about to carry a report of our defense to the Prince, and I de-

terminated to prevent him. Presently I looked up into his face and found him regarding me.

It was as if flint had met flint; our eyes flashed.

"Do you think that you can swim across the river?" I said.

"Yes, if I wish to; but I shall be rowed across," he replied in his imperious tone.

"To-night?"

"At dawn. And now, my lord, you need ask me no more." He put his hand in his belt and drew out my gold. "I did not use this," he said. "I thank you for your generosity, twice shown to a prisoner. Here is your money." The arrogant note died from his tone; it rang suddenly civil and grateful.

He laid the gold jacobuses on the flag that separated us. I did not move, continuing to look at him. "At dawn," I commented. "At dawn. I am a taller man and I think a stronger man than you, Lieutenant Cole, and I mean to prevent your crossing the Shannon."

He held up his head and his nostrils dilated. "Pardon me, but you are acting as a fool, Captain Iveagh," he said angrily.

We both rose to our feet and measured each

other with hostile eyes. Then a sudden shrill cry sent our heads round in the direction of the archway. A woman stood framed against the background of the night, a cloak drawn over her face. We stared at her for a moment in silence.

She flung back the cloak, and as she advanced towards us I recognized the woman whom I had met at the forge. The English captain had sent her from the castle, but I was surprised to find her on this side of the river. I wondered who had put her across, why she had not gone to the enemy's camp. She stumbled over the flags, her hands outstretched.

"Sirs," she shrieked, "I have lost my way. Where am I?"

"In a graveyard, madam," Cole replied abruptly, and drew back with a frown. The woman's eyes fell on the skull, and she uttered a piercing scream and ran towards me.

"Help me, handsome gentleman," she said hysterically. "A graveyard! And one in my dead Ephraim's uniform!"

I told her that we were both men clothed in flesh, and that she had nothing to fear. As I spoke I saw that Cole looked at her with sudden attention.

"Are you Bess Hinks?" he demanded. His tone was imperiously haughty, his expression changed.

She started, looked at him, and her bold eyes grew abashed. "One of Ephraim's officers," she muttered, and made a deep courtesy.

"That is my name sir," she answered, and gave me an oblique glance.

"Your husband is dead," said Cole.

"Alack, sir, the captain at the castle told me he was killed in the trenches."

"He was murdered," said Cole, sharply, "and I am about to arrest his murderer."

I looked at him with surprise. How had he learned of the murder when it was unknown to the officers and men of his regiment. Cole turned to me. "My Lord Iveagh," he said stiffly. "It is possible that you think I am carrying information about your defenses to my King. On my honor, which I have twice pledged to you, I am not. I am crossing the Shannon to fulfil a duty intrusted to me, also to see that Hinks, the murderer, is arrested and hung."

"Is this duty one that will be of harm to my party?" I demanded.

"It is a private and personal matter," he an-

swered, "and in no way affects the defense or leaguer of the city."

I tried to read his face. It was an errand for Ethne og, upon which he was engaged. There was an air of honesty about him that convinced me that he spoke the truth. Yet he had been in the city and had seen some of our batteries; and before I stood by and let him escape to pleasure the maid, I must have his word that he would not reveal what he had learned. Besides, what errand could Ethne have on the enemy's side of the river?

I left him to reflect upon the position, and approached the fire. Bess Hinks knelt on a flag by the blaze, holding her thin needle-pricked fingers over the glow. She looked up with a glance I only partly read, and moved to the end of the flag as if making room for me. "Sir," she said, lowering her voice, "where are you going, if I may make so free as to ask?"

I did not take the place so obviously offered.

"To Limerick," I replied.

"And after that?"

I paused before I answered. "After that marches and battles, and then perhaps France."

"Is it far to Limerick, sir?"

I told her the distance, and she seemed to reflect. "My uncle is there," she said, presently, and gave me another sidelong glance. As I showed no interest in the information, she continued: "Alack, he is a prisoner, and I am told that if I wish to see him I must inquire for a gentleman named Purcell."

I looked up sharply and regarded her for a minute. Presently she colored and bridled under the steadiness of my gaze, and leaving the fire approached Cole, who stood with his face to the window and the black night. He turned and regarded her coldly. I heard her address him, but her tone was too low for me to hear; and he presently left her, and came to the fire. She followed, and we gave her the best side of the fire, sitting ourselves among broken stones and grass. As we fell into friendly talk, speaking of hunting, dogs and horses, her head nodded, and presently she sat up with a start, wrapped her cloak around her, and drew off to the fallen flagstones of the altar, where she lay down and fell asleep.

After a time, we, too, slept, and the dawn had come when I awoke chilled and stiff. Looking round I saw that the woman had gone and thought

of her words and wondered who had told her of Purcell.

Cole still slept, and I rose and went to the door. Five or six armed men lounged by a wall half-way down the hill. From their half pikes and dress I knew that they were a party of Rapparees, men who could help me to detain Cole. They came up the hill and greeted me with loud and joyful acclamations.

"We were watching along the bank for you, tigearna (lord)," they said. "Galloping Hogan sent us word that you had escaped."

"Where is he?" I asked. I desired to meet him and charge him with desertion of my party at Cloona.

"In the city, tigearna. Och, but the stormers will try the breach soon! But, thank God, and glory to him, Padraig Sarsfield is ready for them."

"Men," I said, "there is a young Sassenagh officer in the ruin asleep, and I must send him back to Limerick, for I fear he knows too much of our defenses."

They exchanged glances. "Is his name Cole?" asked one of the group.

"Yes," I replied.

"Then, Niall MacGuinness of Iveagh, he must

go over the Shannon," the man answered. "We have orders to take him across."

There was a set look on his face that told that he meant to obey the order. I tried to reason with him and his followers. I showed them that they would be traitors if they helped one of the King's enemies to escape, and demanded the name of the person who had given such a command. They answered me civilly, but there was a doggedness in their manner that made me aware that I was not their officer, and that they would carry out the order they had received.

In the midst of our conversation Cole came to the door. On seeing the men he asked coolly if they were those persons whom he expected to meet. The leader of the party pointed to a boat whose bow showed by the bank. He had guessed the meaning of the question, not understanding English. "We are ready," he said, and glanced at me, as if expecting that I should act the part of interpreter.

But this I declined to do, and Cole's eyes having followed the gesture, he saw the boat. He turned to me, his hand held out.

"Let us part as friends," he said. "I am a

messenger whose errand is a friendly one to you, my Lord Iveagh. Farewell."

It was impossible to prevent his departure. I was unarmed and the Rapparees would not obey me. I took his hand.

"I would fain keep you prisoner," I answered. "But as I may not, I will part your friend, my foe."

He laughed, looking at me with bright, friendly eyes. "I shall avoid your sword when we cross the breach!" he said, "and hope to meet you in better times."

The men had already gone down to the river, and he swung round and ran after them. On the bank he paused, one foot in the boat, and looked back and waved his hat. The next moment he sprang into the boat, and the men, bending to the oars, rowed out into the stream.

Before entering the city I visited the cavalry camp, where I changed my clothes, shaved and booted myself. I found the havoc caused by the bombardment worse than I had expected. The wharves were on fire, many houses in flames, walls were leveled, and dead men and women and children lay in the street. I had returned at the pause before the final assault. The enemy's

trenches were within four yards of the counter-scarp, and the palisades had been beaten down. Yet everywhere I saw resolute faces and heard the grim resolve of the citizens to hold Limerick to the last.

My intention to proclaim Ethne a traitor had weakened during the hours in which I had walked towards the city. Hogan's conduct, however, I intended to report; O'Kavanagh, too, should be faced. I decided to go to Sarsfield's house before reporting myself at the castle and inform him of what had happened at Cloona. I was told at the door that he was engaged; and, seeing the old man servant, a sudden thought struck me. I went towards him and asked if Ethne Ni Brien were in the house.

"She is, she is, tigearna," he said. "The women would not leave, and they are on the ramparts now with the men."

"But, good God, not your mistress and Ethne Ni Brien?"

He stared at me. "Arriu! where is your sense? They to be on the ramparts! Yet," he added, "it is an opinion with me that the bean-uasal og would like to be there. Och! did I not tell you that many a fine man would fall? It is the

women of Limerick I mean. They would not leave the city when the generals ordered them to go. Great God, there is courage on them!"

He led me up the stairs to the door of the room where I had had my interview with Lady Honoria, and bade me go in. I obeyed, and found Ethne alone in the apartment. Her face was turned from me as she leaned against a cabinet, and she did not hear me enter. In the shriek of shells, the roar of cannon, I knew she might remain unaware of my presence for some time. For a minute, therefore, I stood and studied her in that silence within the tumult of the siege.

Then some influence made her turn. A bright color rushed to her face, and she stood upright at once. Into her eyes sprang a look that baffled me. They smiled, invited, mocked, grew grave, wistful, mysterious. The words I had prepared to say were suddenly checked on my lips.

We stood still, looking at each other. A minute or more must have passed, then I bowed. "Did you send Mor to help me when I was a prisoner?" I asked.

She smiled. "Why should I wish to help you? You went to hang my uncle. Mor helped you

because her father went out with your father's hostings."

I walked up to her and took her hands. Her face flushed again before my gaze. She tried to withdraw her hands, but I held them fast.

"Beautiful Ethne Ni Brien," I said slowly, "yours is a face that comes once in a hundred—no, a thousand years. You are a reincarnation, a rebirth, of one of the divine women who lured the heroes of Erin to their islands and raths centuries ago. I see all the beauty of the world when I look into your eyes; all shame when I look away."

She met my gaze as I spoke with steady lids. "Then I am Diana, the war goddess," she answered. "Armed, she has shouted in the camp, and to-morrow you try your strength with your foe! And yet you stand here, here, and speak as a coward and a fool! My hands shall not be longer in yours, for I know what is in your heart!"

"Ah, if you did!" I said. "But Ethne, beautiful Ethne, you are not true, and now I charge you with your falsity. Cole has escaped. He has escaped to do your errand."

Her eyes instantly sank, and she stood before me, motionless. Her lovely head was bent; her

face had that fair, aloof look that made me only remember I was a man and silenced reason. Yet I had a desire to keep my sanity and retain sufficient clearness of judgment in my arraignment of the traitor.

"It is true! I helped him to escape," she said in a bell-like voice, full, appealing, sudden. "And now take your hands from my hands, Niall MacGuinness, and pray to God to give you brighter wits!"

I released them, as she struggled to be free, and they fell, red, at her sides. The sight made me feel a brute, ashamed. In a moment that that I had locked my heart against leaped in as light into a darkened room and took command of my being. I fell on one knee, took the outraged hands and raised them to my lips. The next second they were withdrawn, and she turned and fled from the room. I sprang to my feet and approached the window. I felt like a man seized with some mortal sickness. In blind confidence I had run up against the wall of my destiny, and had learned that death and love are the kings before whom life reels. A power strong as the senses yet spirit-born entered my naked soul. I saw love and eternity carrying what was godlike

in love as a star into eternity. I knew the love of the flesh and the love of the spirit ; and I beheld these things with eyes that desired and with the quickening of a soul seeking its mate.

Suddenly I started and turned from the window. She had captured me as she had captured so many men ; I was her thrall. My will made a last effort to cast off her spell. I proclaimed myself a fool ; I appealed to reason. With a quick step I crossed the room and went down the stair. Then my eyes fell on O'Kavanagh standing in the hall, his wolf-hound at his feet. At sight of the man who had been my friend a sudden anger, hot, charged with hate, seized me. My disobedience of the order I had received, my capture were due to him. With swift steps I advanced.

"Now!" I exclaimed, standing before him, "what have you to say why I should not draw my sword upon you, Murrough O'Kavanagh?"

He looked at me with a haggard face. "I am glad you have escaped," he replied.

"Your soul to the devil!" I cried. "A fine greeting! That I escaped is no thanks to you. You warned the traitor O'Brien. You gave him time—perhaps told him—to drug the wine, to summon the enemy's patrol!"

"Iveagh," his voice was low, taking something of a woman's sweetness. "It is useless to fight against the gods. I tried it with a man's strength, and their iron hands turned me to my doom. By the faith I hold I meant you no wrong."

"You went because a woman told you!"

"It is true, because a woman told me, the woman I mean to marry."

His words recalled me to myself. He was my rival, he who had been my friend before.

My tone changed. "Hogan played me false," I said.

"No," he answered, "not false. He and Mor saved O'Brien for Ethne's sake. But when he found that a patrol had been summoned he went out and gathered his men in order to rescue you at the pass."

I turned from him without another word. I knew that the friendship between us which had been so pleasant a tie, so true a comradeship, was parting, shorn by the shears of fate. Going to the sentry, I asked if the General had passed out, and, learning that he had gone, I went to the castle to make my report.

CHAPTER VIII

SARSFIELD was alone when I entered the round room in the south tower, where De Boisseleau and the Council met. He was walking up and down, with his hands clasped behind his back, his head held up, a look of power, of energy, in his air. He turned sharply as the door opened, and his expression changed as his eyes fell on me.

"We heard you were taken prisoner," he said.

I saluted. "I escaped from my prison, swam the Shannon, and am here, sir."

His clear blue eyes rested on my face. "You failed to carry out your orders," he remarked, "and have incurred the displeasure of M. de Boisseleau and the Duke."

I had expected to hear this. "O'Brien was warned, sir," I replied. "He told me that an orderly had brought a reprieve."

"You are not a fool, Iveagh. You served me well in Connacht and I know you to be honest. I think you have been slandered to the Duke of

Berwick and De Boisseleau, but I have no power to help you. You should have hung O'Brien."

I stood silent, my eyes on the floor, and he continued: "If you remain here you will be arrested, for I expect the Duke and M. de Boisseleau every minute. I believe you honest, I know you to be valiant, so you shall act as my aid-de-camp to-day. Take this order to Brigadier Talbot. He is to quarter the horse to-night in Irishtown. Then ride to the camp and tell Colonel Maxwell to bring his regiment into the city. And, Iveagh, though Ethne og is beautiful, her uncle deserved death."

"Sir, I had seen Ethne Ni Brien but twice," I answered, "when I rode to hang her uncle."

He smiled. "Twice too often, I expect," he said. "She is a lovely colleen."

I looked with what innocence I might into his eyes. "Is it your opinion, sir, that the Prince of Orange will attempt the breach to-morrow?"

His face changed, his eyes looked grave almost to sadness.

"To-morrow will decide the fate of the city," he replied. "The women have refused to leave."

"And we shall drive back the enemy!"

"With God's help, yes; but the breach is thirty-

five feet wide. Now, lad, go and find Talbot, for if you are found here I cannot prevent your arrest."

I saluted, but he held out his hand, and I took it with a deep feeling of gratitude and affection. Then, turning, I walked out of the room, and learned at the gate that Brigadier Talbot had gone to his quarters. He lodged with several other officers in a house on the battlements, amongst whom was Baldearg O'Donnell, whose cross I had forgotten in the press of other thoughts. The house was frequented by many gentlemen of the garrison, and was the one from which I had been summoned on the night of Sarsfield's expedition. Standing by the wall it had escaped destruction by a marvel. Houses near by were in ruins or flames; shot and shell fell in the street; dead bodies lay around. As I went up the stair I heard snatches of song, clinking of glasses, and the rattle of dice, and felt that my mood was not attuned to theirs. William's stormers would attempt the breach to-morrow, and we had to hurl them back. Soldier though I was, I was oppressed by the thought of death. These men were going with laughter and oaths to their end. I, who had looked in Ethne's eyes, desired to live.

The room was crowded as I entered, and pausing by the door for a moment I looked round the apartment for Talbot. The upper end was brightened by a gleam of yellow light that came through a window facing the west. The men sitting or standing there looked, with their flushed faces and reckless air, as if lit up by a lurid glow. They were singing, drinking, dicing; the place was full of noise. Suddenly a voice rose above the others, young O'Carroll's, thin, clear, crying one word. In an instant the men turned their faces towards where I stood, and a dead silence fell upon the room. Each gaze was hostile.

I stared from man to man, not understanding what those unanimous eyes meant. A look of expectation, of stern attention sprang to each face. Those who had glasses in their hands kept them from their lips, the dicers ceased to cast a main; the songs died away in the singers' throats. Baldearg O'Donnell sat stiff and upright in the middle of the room, bold, bronzed, menacing, repellent. O'Carroll's eyes shot fire; and across his shoulder I saw the hatchet face and lowering gaze of Purcell, and knew that this was his work.

"Is Brigadier Talbot present?" I called out and advanced into the room.

There was no answer, and I walked up to one of the tables. The men sitting at it rose with a hasty clash of steel and strode away. I looked after them with astonishment.

"I bear an order from General Sarsfield," I said. "An order for the brigadier."

Some one laughed, and I turned my face in the direction whence the sound had come. "Gentlemen," I said, keeping my temper, "some among you seem easily amused. But my order is important, the horse are to be brought into Irishtown. I do not see the brigadier, and I wish to know where he is."

Baldearg O'Donnell rose suddenly. His hand rested on the pommel of his sword, his air was that of a man swelling with anger and contempt.

"Do you claim to be General Sarsfield's aide-de-camp?" he asked curtly.

Before I could answer a number of men sprang to their feet. "Turn out the thief!" they cried. "Turn him out!"

The blood rushed to my face. For a few seconds I stared from man to man. Then in a moment I recalled the tale Fitzgerald had told me on the mountainside, and I knew what they meant.

I turned towards Purcell with eyes that made him search with a swift nervous hand at his swordless side.

"It is that man's work!" I said. "Liar! Let me hear the charge."

"You shall," said O'Donnell, and placed himself in front of the men. "MacGuinness of Iveagh, I wish to act in this matter without passion. The charge is a black one, and there is not one man here who would not be glad if you can disprove it. Is it not so, comrades?" He glanced across his shoulder at the hot, frowning faces.

The majority had judged me already, I saw, but here and there men, former friends, appeared anxious that I should prove my innocence. They answered that O'Donnell had expressed their minds.

"Then, Iveagh, you stand before us accused of the theft of the cross that His Imperial Majesty the Emperor of Austria presented to me for service in the wars against the Turks. What answer can you give?"

For a moment indignation kept me silent, then I laughed. "My answer? Gentlemen, the charge is a lie! My answer is a challenge to any man who repeats it."

"The cross was seen in your belt," said O'Donnell.

I looked across the room at Purcell. He stood with folded arms, his eyes on the floor, an air sleek, assured about him. "That was your dastardly work, fellow," I cried. "You put it there."

He raised his eyes. "Then, Captain Iveagh, you do not deny the fact that the cross was in your belt!"

I suddenly stiffened. "Colonel O'Donnell, comrades," I exclaimed, "that man has used what I believe was his own act to injure my honor. I did not put the cross in my belt, I found it there."

A loud murmur ran round the room; I saw the friendly faces instantly harden; my confession had damned me in my comrades' eyes. A blaze of anger leaped up in my heart.

"We will hear Purcell's charge," said O'Donnell coldly. "Purcell, for the benefit of my Lord Iveagh, relate what you saw."

"I do so with regret," the fellow answered. "I have no enmity against MacGuinness of Iveagh, and as a man of honor deplore a comrade's disgrace. The fact, however, is proved, acknowledged by Iveagh that the cross was in his belt. I will remind you of the scene, gentlemen. Lauzun

had accepted the challenge, and the cross was passed from hand to hand before it was finally placed in the fair ones of a lady to whom as gentlemen we mean to make no further reference. Am I not right, Colonel O'Donnell?"

"Yes," was the reply, given quickly, haughtily. "The lady's name is not to be mentioned. Whatever carelessness there may have been in the guarding of my cross, I am not one to bring a woman's name into this matter."

"An act of chivalry which we as men and soldiers approve," my accuser went on. "There was a claret velvet box in which the cross was about to be placed when Iveagh asked to be allowed to look at the jewel. He then returned it to the fair hands, and the cross was put into the box. Twenty minutes later I saw something gleam in Iveagh's hand, and I saw him thrust this gleaming thing into his belt. Our eyes encountered, as Iveagh will remember. Not understanding what I had seen, I believed that he had, at the request of the lady, taken charge of it. But when I heard the rumor that the cross was lost, I then knew that the temptation to refill his empty pockets had been too strong for my Lord Iveagh."

I listened to the story, controlling my rage. It

had that grain of truth that makes a false charge hard to disprove. I had no witness to bring, being bound by my promise to Lady Honoria, and the fact of the cross having been in my possession made my guilt seem evident to all. In the pause O'Donnell looked at me.

"What have you to say, Iveagh?" he asked.

"Captain Purcell is a liar," I replied slowly, meeting his eyes. "A liar whose life shall answer for this charge. I believe that he opened the box, for he stood by the console on which it was placed—and that it was he who thrust it in my belt. The room was thronged; in the press he could do it without attracting my attention."

Every face looked incredulous as I spoke; O'Donnell regarded me with a black brow. The incident affected him more than it did the others. The cross was his property; the reward of his bravery, and of considerable value.

"MacGuinness of Iveagh," he said, "your explanation of how the cross came into your belt is in my opinion both contemptible and puerile. We are men, not fools. You make a false charge to take the guilt from your shoulders. It is well known that you quarreled with Purcell in Connacht, and that you used your friendship with

General Sarsfield to obtain command of a garrison of which Purcell had charge."

I interrupted in a white heat of anger. "A garrison that he was about to deliver up to the enemy! Ask the men who formed it!"

"We also know that you lost heavily at play in this room on the night of Sarsfield's ride. Yet three nights afterwards your purse was so replenished that you were able to lend an English prisoner ten gold jacobuses; not louis d'or, remember, but English money. Where did you get that gold?"

"You insolent fool!" I answered. "By what right do you dare question me thus? Galloping Hogan gave me the gold, as he will prove. And now, here, to every man, I say that I will answer further questions alone with my sword."

"Comrades!" O'Donnell turned to the men. "I think I speak the opinion of all present when I tell MacGuinness of Iveagh that we hold him guilty of theft and that we regard him as one who has disgraced his name, his race and his country."

There was a unanimous assent, and seeing myself thus condemned, I challenged O'Donnell.

But he answered haughtily that he drew his

sword alone upon men of honor, and that, as I had confessed to the possession of the cross, I could be no longer regarded as one. In deadly wrath I turned to the men.

"The charge is a lie!" I said, speaking slowly in my rage. "I shall prove that it is a lie and avenge this insult. Captain Purcell"—I strode up to him and struck him on the face—"you are a liar and a traitor and a coward!"

He sprang back, a sudden shifty light in his eyes; then he broke into a laugh—forced, hoarse—to hide his confusion. But one of my words had told; he had grown pale before the name of traitor. As we faced each other, while one or two voices cried out to Purcell to strike back, the door was flung open and the man I had come to seek, Brigadier Talbot, entered the room.

"Gentlemen, to the ramparts!" he cried in a loud authoritative tone. "Colonel O'Donnell, proceed to the Black Battery! And you, gentlemen, get to your posts!"

The men at once seized their belts, and one after the other went swiftly from the room. Purcell threw me a furtive, malignant glance as he passed, the mark of my blow on his face. I

walked up to the brigadier, saluted, and gave him the order.

He fixed me with a cold and searching look as he took it. When he had read the paper he turned on his heel without a word and left the room, so that I knew that he, too, had heard the story of the theft and deemed me a thief.

I had left my horse at Thomond Bridge Gate, on the Clare side, and going thither I mounted and rode at a gallop to the cavalry camp. Once I turned in the saddle and looked back at the city. A thick pall of smoke hung over the houses, throwing a dark shadow on the water. Shells fell into the doomed streets; pale flames shot up from the wharfs. Explosions, the noise of falling roofs and walls and the incessant cannonade made sounds of dread. I forgot my own wrongs as I looked at that terrific sight and knew that the morrow must decide our fate.

On reaching the camp I rode to Colonel Maxwell's tent and gave the order, and then passed on to the quarters of my regiment. The sun had set and a clear, soft light rested over the camp. The men stood about in groups and saluted as I went slowly by. The mark of respect, scarcely

noticed once, now cheered my spirits, and I rode up to my tent with confidence. A number of officers had gathered at the door, and their presence there told me that the story had reached their ears. Halting, I eyed them in silence from the saddle. The senior major stepped forward and offered me his hand. He told me in the name of my comrades that they believed me innocent, and that they wished to hear the tale from my own lips. I invited the party into my tent and related the incidents. They promised to stand by my side when I had done. But instinctively I knew that that business of the cross in my belt had damaged my case in their eyes.

When alone I summoned my servant and told him to find Hogan. After a search he returned and said that the scout was reported to be in Limerick. This was good news, but I had no time to dwell upon my own affairs, for in half an hour we were in our saddles, an order from Sarsfield bringing us into the city. Having seen the horses of my troops stabled and the men given quarters, I went to Great Street to make my report. I was informed there that Sarsfield had gone to inspect the batteries, and especially the one known as the Black Battery, where a mine

had been laid. "After that," said the orderly, "he and the Duke of Berwick and M. de Boisseleau will be at the breach to inspect the masked guns."

As Sarsfield had advised me to keep out of the sight of the latter, I determined to defer my report, for I wished to be with my troops on the morrow and not a prisoner in one of the towers of the castle. I lingered in the hall, and in the pause reflected upon my position. Presently I thought I would ask for an interview with Lady Honoria and tell her of Purcell's charge. Approaching the old man servant who had been mooning aimlessly up and down in a corner of the hall, I asked if his mistress were still in the city.

"She goes at midnight," he replied. "Och, but she has the great courage, and would not go at all if she had the will."

"Where shall I find her?" I said. "But perhaps she is engaged."

He pointed to a door at the end of the wide hall. "Go in there," he said, "and pass through the first room; in the second one you will find her."

I walked towards the door, opened it and entered a large apartment. At the upper end was a

double door, one of which stood open. It was dimly lighted by a few candles, and I saw two figures—those of a man and a woman—seated side by side on a settee, with their backs towards me. The man was leaning forward, his elbows on his knees, his face in his hands. A glance showed me that the woman was Ethne. Her arm rested on the settee, her head was turned from her companion.

“I wish to God,” he said, and I stopped involuntarily, for the voice was O’Kavanagh’s—“I wish to God you had not put this trouble on me, my pearl and fairest; you have left no strength in me.”

“If I am a pearl and the fairest, I am not your pearl or your fairest from this hour forever and ever, Murrough O’Kavanagh!” she answered, her head still averted.

I walked forward, and at the sound of my steps she looked around, but O’Kavanagh did not move. She blushed faintly, and I, meeting her eyes, sought to read the soul within her.

“Oh, pearl of my pearl, I am in darkness without you. You are my joy and my torment. But my torment is sweet torment if you give me your love.”

She rose to her feet, stretching out a hand, as if to silence him. He looked up, and on seeing me raised his head. "Here is one man who is not my rival," he said; "one man!" He sat erect suddenly and gazed at me with gray, searching eyes.

I bowed to Ethne and passed on. Her lids drooped, but she did not move, keeping her white hand still stretched out. I went to the double door, opened the one that was closed and drew it behind me as I entered the inner room.

Lady Honoria was on her knees before a crucifix. I heard her sobbing as she prayed. I stood still, conscious that my presence was an intrusion. Yet to retire was as awkward as to advance. The lovers were now perhaps reconciled, and I should disturb their happiness. A sudden bitterness of heart came over me. I felt alone, a hostile world before me.

Presently the door behind me opened and a dark robed figure flitted by and knelt by Lady Honoria's side. I saw an arm placed around the weeping woman and the girl's lips pressed to her tear-stained cheek. I bent my head.

A little later I heard my name spoken and looked up. Lady Honoria was standing with the crucifix in her hand, her eyes overflowing with

tears. Ethne's face was in profile, her gaze on her friend. The storm of the bombardment echoed loudly in the room; voices, men and women's, shouted in the street.

"God be with my husband and his gallant men to-morrow," she said in a trembling voice. "Sorrow is upon me and many women to-night."

"I thank God, bean-uasal dileas (sweet lady)," I answered, "that no woman's heart is full of dread for me to-night."

I looked from her to the girl, and found Ethne's eyes on my face. To speak of the cross was impossible, and I bowed and went out of the room. The large apartment was empty; the candles made faint points of light in the gloom; the shadows of a man and a woman appeared to my fancy thrown upon the settee. For one moment I paused, then, perturbed, angry, despondent, walked on. O'Kavanagh was in the hall. He was seated on a bench, with his dog standing by his knee, and turned his head towards me as I approached. In the dim light thrown from a lamp that was hung on the wall I saw that his face wore a strange expression. Flinging myself down on the bench, I laid one foot on my knee, thrust my hands into my belt and fixed my eyes across the hall. Neither of us

spoke, and in the silence the place seemed, in my dark and concentrated mood, to hold a world within itself through which the furious din of the siege could not pierce.

The hound left his master and came to greet me. The act broke the spell that held us silent. As I caressed the animal O'Kavanagh sat upright and fixed his eyes on my face.

"Iveagh."

"Well?"

"Cole, whom you took prisoner, has escaped."

"Yes. I know it."

"He loves Ethne og. She helped him to escape. They are to meet again." His calmness broke, his voice shook with passion.

"Did you learn this from her?"

"Not from her, I saw it. Oh, I know it. To-night she told me she did not love me."

"To-morrow night you may be dead! To possess her love will be of no importance then."

He looked me straight in the eyes—a stern, grave gaze. "She shall be my bride in the grave," he said.

I assumed a sudden tone of gayety. "You have forgotten Mor's words. You are to have no grave."

"For that reason I shall not die to-morrow," he answered, and turned his eyes towards the room where I had found him.

I rose to my feet. "Look! What are women to us?" I said. "Can we carry them into the arms of death? O'Kavanagh, if I fall to-morrow, kill Purcell; he has slandered my honor."

He got up slowly, like one aroused from sleep. "You have forgotten my ride to Cloona?" he said, in a mechanical voice.

I gave a laugh. "Oh, let the ride go to the devil!" I exclaimed. "We have another ride before us now!"

I walked to the door, and I heard him follow. In the street we separated, he going to the breach, I to my quarters. But that night few men in Limerick slept. The city was in its agony, and the coming day would see its fate. All through the night the enemy poured in a discharge of shells and red-hot balls, and the breach lay thirty-six feet wide, an open gate for the foe.

CHAPTER IX

BUT behind the breach a retirade had been made and a battery of guns planted, while others were so placed as to take the stormers on both flanks. The bugles rang at daybreak, and the drums beat. Men left their trenches as the soldiers fell in; the butchers armed themselves with their cleavers, the blacksmiths with their hammers. The women seized bottle and stone, and followed the men. As I hurried to the rendezvous of my regiment, I saw column after column crossing Ball's Bridge on their way to the breach. My troop had already formed up and the men stood to their horses. Though the infantry would bear the brunt of the fight, we knew that Sarsfield had not brought us into the city to rust in our saddles.

I had hardly arrived at the scene when the Duke of Berwick and M. de Boisseleau rode up, followed by their staff. They were given a cheer as they passed, but a few minutes later a great shout arose from the armed citizens as Sarsfield

approached. At sight of him, who was the soul of the defense, the stern and anxious watchers gave voice to their hope and trust. Cheer rang after cheer ; men cried out that they would stand by his side in the breach. He acknowledged the acclamations by a salute with his sword ; then, as silence fell on the crowd, said some brave words and passed on.

As I looked around and saw the tension on the faces of the crowd, the spirit of that mass of men, prepared to die rather than yield, struck an answering chord in my heart. The subtle current of heroic resolve passing from soul to soul touched what of courage there was in me.

We were ordered to mount, and had to sit still in our saddles on the island side of Ball's Bridge, while the enemy poured into the city a hot discharge from their batteries. The morning began dull and cloudy, a thick mist lying on the Keeper Mountain. As the day advanced, the sun broke through the clouds, and the heat became intense. By two o'clock the tumult of the guns ceased, and the city was again summoned. For an hour there was a deep pause after that confident demand and the resolute answer. Then three guns were fired from the enemy's camp—a signal ; and

the defenders on the breach looked to their weapons.

A minute later the iron head of the attacking column, ten thousand strong, moved forward to the assault. The Grenadiers, leaping out of their trenches, sprang on the counterscarp, firing and throwing their grenades. They were met by a fire of great and small shot; but driving the defenders before them, they pressed on, reached the breach and poured into the city. The masked battery opened upon them, making a wide path through their piebald line and, cut off from their supports, they were overpowered and killed, but few escaping to the trenches.

The full fury of the fight now raged at the breach. We of the horse, sitting in our saddles, listened, impatient and anxious for our turn, to the terrific conflict. For three hours the infantry stood shoulder to shoulder, filling up again and again their bloody gaps as regiment after regiment of the foe was brought up and hurled against their ranks. At last, slowly, the gallant line was pushed back, and once more the stormers entered the city. They rushed through the streets, and a fierce hand-to-hand fight ensued. We thought now that Sarsfield would send us forward, and

each man straightened in the saddle, his hand on his thigh. But Boisseleau ordered up the reserves, and those who had been driven from the breach rallied. The citizens—women as well as men—advanced again to the attack, and the enemy was dislodged and forced back on the gap.

A deadly struggle followed as they tried to hold their ground. The Prince of Orange sent forward his reserves, who rushed upon the breach. There our men met and held them in check, while an order was sent to the horse to take the foe in the rear.

Our turn had come.

The advance was sounded immediately, and in a minute we were galloping across Ball's Bridge. Without tightening rein we swept through the streets and dashed up to St. John's Gate. The sallyport was thrown open and we passed out in double file. A covered way leading to the breach ran by the wall. This was our path, and we followed it with confidence. As we emerged from the tunnel we saw in front two regiments of Danish horse, who at once formed in line to prevent our advance. We charged, rode through them, cut them down and swept on. Then, galloping up to the breach, took the stormers in the

rear, made a path through their ranks and rode across with crimson sabres and exultant cheers.

The suddenness and dash of our action staggered the foe. As we wheeled the sun became eclipsed, the ground shook, and a great roar drowned the sound of the muskets. The mine laid in the Black Battery had blown up. The men of the Brandenburg regiment, who in the second attack had carried and not yet been dislodged from the battery, were hurled into the air. At the sight our foot rushed upon the enemy's reserves, forced them from the breach, drove them across it over the counterscarp and back to the trenches, following them to their camp. The squadrons charged on the flying foe, sabring their disordered ranks.

The assault had failed and the city was saved. Presently we were recalled and reentered the street. Our victorious men poured back across the breach, shouting, laughing, weeping.

During the battle I forgot that life held any other duty but that of the one—to slay. A fierce primordial instinct had been aroused at the shoutings of men, the strife around. Death was my master for the time, and I had obeyed his commands. But now that the enemy had been de-

feated, the grim king's hand relaxed. The anger of war died in my heart; a sickening feeling took its place. Men lay piled in heaps across the breach; down the street the dead and wounded met my gaze; groans sounded around. Staggering from my saddle, I leaned against my horse.

The evening sky was pink over Cratloe Woods; the great cloud of smoke that had arisen from the city was fading from the Keeper Mountain as the sun went down red in the west. A mist filled my eyes as I gazed. Sounds vibrated about me, echoes of the battle that still seemed to linger in the air, mingling with those that were real and near; the chanting of the priests as they passed by to the Cathedral; the sudden piercing cry of a woman as she sought and found her dead. Then the hard metallic ring of hoofs on the stones struck on my ear, and I looked up sharply, with cleared eyes roused to attention. An officer had galloped up to my side, bareheaded, drunk with the delirium of the fight.

"Take this to Cloona," he cried, and held out a letter.

I straightened myself at once. "Who gave the order?" I asked.

"General Sarsfield," the man answered, and

turned away. I looked at the address and, gathering up my reins, sprang into the saddle. It was to Lady Honoria. To Cloona, then, she had gone; and I thought of Ethne. O'Kavanagh's ominous words flashed back to my mind, but they seemed of no importance now.

I turned my horse's head from the breach and rode up the street. The dead lay about in every attitude of defiance and despair. The Grenadiers had fallen here, and their gay uniforms made scarlet spots that gave a ghastly brightness to a scene where the stream of blood had already darkened. One body had fallen in such a posture across a soldier of MacMahon's regiment that the bell hanging at his belt rang out every few seconds with a sharp stroke as it swayed in the breeze.

At Ball's Bridge women leaned from the windows, sobbing with joy. They waved their hands and blessed me as I passed. On crossing I went up Great Street, going by the castle around which a crowd had gathered, and so on to Thomond Bridge. Then the fresh wind from the river blew the smell of slaughter from my nostrils, and making the sign of the cross, I looked up and thanked God that I was still a living man.

On the other side of the Shannon I set spurs to my horse and galloped along the familiar way. Leaving the cavalry camp in my rear, I followed the road that led to Cloona. The sun had set, and gray and violet shades lay on the mountain-side and filled the valleys. Long stretches of pink and green spread above the southern horizon, melting into the gathering night. A vastness and peace seemed about me, as if the havoc of war had been gathered into some mighty hand and hidden there. Life appeared once more as a long and pleasant march. Now and again I should stand at ease, should take my share of the spoil, should win each fight. And all the way, from halt to halt, I saw a woman in my arms who looked at me with Ethne's eyes.

It was night when I reached Cloona. A party of Rapparees patrolled the avenue, and I drew up and asked for Hogan. The men told me that he had been in the city all day, but did not know his fate. Having scanned their faces in the uncertain light, I rode on, not recognizing among them the pikemen who had taken Cole over the river. Leaving my horse in the stable, I went to the front of the house, where a light alone showed in an upper window. The room in which I had been drugged

and captured looked dark and deserted. As I paused on the doorstep I suddenly recalled the fact that I had ridden from the battle without making any change in my dress or giving attention to my person. My hands and uniform bore traces of the fight, and I knew I must be a grim and perhaps repulsive figure. At this thought I turned from the house and crossed the lawn to the edge of the lake. Choosing a spot where a small thicket grew, I knelt on the ground and thrust my hands into the water. The stars were coming out; the night was clear and luminous.

After a time I caught the sound of light footsteps on the other side of the bush. They passed on and went towards the house. Then came a tapping on a window, which after a brief interval was opened and some one got out. Two persons then crossed the grass and paused a few yards from the bush. I rose from my knees and looked through the thin line of larch. The figures—those of women—stood on the sward. One I knew was Ethne, the other I guessed was Mor.

“The next night coming to us, Alanna,” the old woman said, “he would meet you. Kind he was, and set me free,” and she bent nearer and whispered in Ethne’s ear.

"I will be there, Mor ; tell him I will be there," I heard her say quickly, and not to listen further I left the shelter of the trees and went up the lawn. On hearing my footsteps they both turned, but my eyes dwelt alone upon Ethne.

"Och ! it is young Niall MacGuinness of Iveagh !" Mor exclaimed, throwing up her hands. "A thousand welcomes before you, my son ! and good health to you and luck forever ! Och ! safe out of the battling you are ! Glory and praise to God for that !"

But Ethne drew back, a shiver running through her frame. "He is killed ! Ah, God and Mary, dead ! slain ! My grief ! he comes from the lough !"

I bared my head and stood still. "I am no ghost," I answered. "I am the Washer at the Ford, and have been taking the battle stains from my hands and garments."

Mor began to glide away ; she passed with swiftness by the trees and down the lawn. Ethne stood rigid on the grass. Her little face caught the radiance of the stars ; I saw how white and strange it looked.

"I am no spirit, Ethne of the hearts, but a man in the flesh," I said. "Shall I draw near ?"

"I think you are dead," she said suddenly in a hollow voice. "And Mor knows it and has fled. Oh, I knew some sword would slay you, Niall of Iveagh, when I met your eyes last night."

"And you cared? Alas, Ethne, it is a woe for him upon whom the knot of love is tied; and it is woe for one to be near you, and it is a woe to him that is not near you. And one night coming you go, Pearl of Pearls, to meet another fool who looks upon you as his star."

There was a pause, and the night around us seemed full of strange and mystic influences, bearing echoes of fairy music that lulled thought and care, and set the soul free to visit all delights. Then I saw Ethne stretch out her hand as she had done when with O'Kavanagh the night before, and come slowly towards me like one fearful of the way. "If you are dead, I will know it," she said in a tone sweet and thrilling.

Without moving I waited, and she came near. Her face looked up searchingly into mine, her eyes at last unveiled, shining, seemed to allow her heart to look through. For one moment her hand rested on my breast, then it fell apart and she drew back. But I took her and held her in my arms.

"Which do you wish," I said, "death or life for me?"

"Death now. Life a minute ago."

"Rest still a moment, Ethne og. You shall have the wish of now, and the wish of a minute since. I am as a dead man through your eyes, and it is a pity, oh, God, I was not blind before I saw you. But I am a living man, and, therefore, fair child, you shall tell me which among those who love you, you would have."

"Not you, Niall MacGuinness, and now free me."

"Is it Cole, that bright boy of the Sassenaghs? Is it Cole you love?"

"And a brave boy and true; why may it not be he?"

"Then is it Murrough O'Kavanagh? Ah, if it is he, I must leave you, sweet Ethne."

"It is not Murrough O'Kavanagh. I have parted with him forever."

"Then—and oh, my patron saint guide me to the truth—did your heart look from your eyes just now? Or have you no heart, lovely sidhe of the raths? Will you change in my arms to a white blossom, a moonbeam?"

"I have seen you thrice, Niall of Iveagh, and I have no heart for you."

"Ah, my moonbeam, my white blossom, is that true? Give me your heart."

Her little head fell against my breast. I put one hand under her chin and raised her face. "You are mine for this moment," I said, "though you meet Cole to-morrow," and kissed her twice.

The sound of hoofs broke on our ears, the rider came up the avenue at the gallop. She broke from my arms and ran to the house. I stood still a few seconds to wait for the horseman, then seeing a light in the dining-room, remembered my errand and went towards the door. As I ran up the steps a servant crossed the hall, who turned and came to me at my call. It was the old man, and to him I gave Sarsfield's letter. At the same moment the horseman reached the door and sprang to the ground. It was O'Kavanagh.

I stretched out my hand. "Alive! unwounded! Well, we have been through a bloody day!"

He clasped my hand with every sound of friendship. "And are victors!" he exclaimed. "William of Orange will now raise the siege. The King's cause is won!"

"Alas, such a king! If he had but the stout heart of his son-in-law! But it is as cold as a fish. What has brought you here, Murrough?"

He made no answer for a second. "I heard you had gone hither," he said briefly ; then added, "M. de Boisseleau has ordered your arrest."

I looked at him in the eyes for a moment before I replied. "And you have come to warn me. Thank you, comrade."

"Do not return to the city," he said earnestly. "Take a boat below the bridge and go down the river to the mouth. There is a French ship in the offing."

I leaned against the wall, folded my arms and looked across the hall. "What is the charge?" I said, after a brief silence.

"There are two. The first is that you have disobeyed an order, a charge which, should it come to the drumhead, I stand to confess my part and give evidence in your favor; the second ——"

I interrupted him. "No, I will not have you give evidence. You could not clear me and would injure yourself. As to the other charge, it is an infamous lie, if you mean the theft of O'Donnell's cross."

He looked out into the night and spoke with his gaze averted. "It is not the theft of the cross," he replied, "though that story is now

known to Boisseleau and the Duke. You are accused of having visited the enemy's outposts on the night of the ride and of being in communication with the Prince of Orange."

I broke into a short laugh. "And you tell me to fly from such a charge! I will ride into Limerick to-night."

"And be shot. You failed to obey orders. The cross has disappeared and Purcell has papers to prove your connection with the enemy."

"I will face my accusers."

He made no answer and the old man servant approached in the pause. "Gentlemen," he said, nodding at us, "supper is awaiting you, and the ladies are at the table."

O'Kavanagh looked around quickly, then turned on his heel and walked to the door of the dining-room. But I lingered, thinking over his words and the charge. It was the second count that held my thoughts. My brief interview with the Prince of Orange had told me that we had a traitor within our ranks. I now knew that it was Purcell.

After an interval I heard the women's voices in the dining-room and, crossing the hall, I entered the apartment. O'Kavanagh was seated at the

table, his face resting on his hands, his eyes on Ethne, who sat opposite to him, with her golden hair in lovely disordered threads on her forehead and her shining eyes turned from his gaze. But they were closed to my reading; where her heart was I could not tell.

Lady Honoria held her husband's letter in her hand; there were tears on her cheeks as she talked swiftly, laughing and weeping in her joy. She left the table as I entered and came towards me.

"Dear friend, tell me all, all!" she cried. "He is alive! Oh, thank God! he is alive! Murrrough O'Kavanagh scarcely speaks! He has eyes but for Ethne."

I kissed her hand and told her of the attack and defense in a few rapid words. Then I led her back to her chair; and going further up the table, filled a glass of wine and drank it standing by the board.

She kissed the letter, smiling through fresh tears, and passed it to Ethne. "The city was held! He is alive!" she cried. "Read the words, sweetheart."

And Ethne looked at it, read it, and held it high with one hand. The light shone on the lace of her dress, the curve of her bosom. "Long life to

all heroes!" she said, "and peace to the brave dead." Then her hand fell to her side, her eyelids drooped. O'Kavanagh sat without moving; his gaze was so concentrated and strange that it began to distress her.

"Why do you look at me, Murrough O'Kavanagh, with that black face?" she said. "What brought you hither since you do not eat or drink?"

"To save a friend," he replied without moving.

"Then turn your eyes from me. I do not like that black stare."

"There is a red mark on your forehead like blood, Ethne Ni Brien, and on the lace of your sleeve."

Her face grew pink from neck to brow and my eyes flashed to my coat. I walked up to Lady Honoria and told her that I was going back to the city. Ethne rose from the table without giving either O'Kavanagh or me a glance and went out of the room.

I took a few mouthfuls of food while Lady Honoria wrote to her husband. Then putting the letter into my belt, I bade her good-bye, nodded to O'Kavanagh and left the apartment. Looking back from the threshold, I found that his eyes had

followed me. I ordered my horse and waited on the step before the hall door. The lawn lay whitened to the lough by the lights from the windows. The black water beyond was touched here and there with silvery lines. Presently I heard O'Kavanagh rise from the table, say some words to Lady Honoria and come into the hall. In a few seconds he was by my side.

"You have kissed Ethne," he said without any emotion. "There is blood on your coat."

I made no answer. "Because I wronged you, because you have been my friend," he went on in the same passionless tone. "I do not wish to kill you. You have done that that she would never let me do."

"Before God, O'Kavanagh," I replied, "she did not kiss me. I know no more of her heart than you or any man."

He turned his head and regarded me for a minute. "Then it is Cole." His voice took a tone of hate. "I might give her to you, but, my God! I will not give her to our foe!" He left me abruptly and went back to the hall. There he wheeled and met my eyes. "Iveagh! I am your friend," he exclaimed, "no matter what the future may be."

Before I could answer he crossed the hall and went into the dining-room. My horse at the same moment approached, and leaving the step I mounted and passed out of the light. I rode slowly and when a few yards from a point where the trees grew close together I saw a woman's figure emerge from the clump and step on to the gray line of avenue. As she paused in front of my horse, I leaped to the ground.

She waved me back. "Return to the saddle," she commanded. "Only from the saddle shall you hear me."

I hesitated, but something in her tone made me obey, and she drew close to my right stirrup.

"When you reach the city you will be put under arrest," she said.

"I know it," I replied, and leaned down to take her hands.

"If you are tried now they will shoot you. Go to General Sarsfield's house and wait there."

"No, dearest, I am going to the castle to face M. de Boisseleau and the Duke. And what does it matter to you whether I am shot or not, since you meet Cole to-morrow night."

She drew her hands away. "It is a fool," she said, "in love with death."

"With you, sweet Ethne, who will be my death unless you say you love me."

She turned her face aside and spoke as if to herself. "Oh, God, to hear him talk, as if death was not at his side!"

"Ethne, I will make a bargain with you. I will stay in Sarsfield's house till noon to-morrow if you will promise not to meet Cole."

She raised her face. "It is not for bargains I came out here into the night, but to tell you to go to Sarsfield's house," she answered. "Will you obey?"

"Sweetest, I dare not. A man must meet a charge that affects his honor. Yet I will dare—to such destruction do you drive me—if you do not meet Cole."

Her eyes dropped, and I felt a hot rage spring up at the sight in my heart. Cole had won her! And we, all her lovers of the King's army, we, the men of Erin, were beaten by that boy of the English! I gathered up my reins to ride on.

Her little white hand caught my stirrup. "I will pray a prayer for your soul," she said, "for death has mounted your crupper."

I tightened my rein and looked down into her face. "If love will take his place," I answered,

"I will halt. Give me your hand and swear that you do not love Cole."

There was a pause, long to my soul—half a minute, perhaps. Then I saw her hand move and I bent down and took it. "You swear, Ethne of the hearts, Ethne of my heart."

"I swear, for I love no man." Her eyes met mine—bright, mocking, yet wistful, too, I thought.

"Ethne, for two kisses I held your lips. Will you go to Cole with those kisses?"

Her face flooded with color. "You took them without my will. I will meet whom I will."

I dropped her hand and she turned and went from me. I said to myself that she did not love me, that it was a true saying that "women go with the wind." She would keep her tryst with Cole, and I, if I were wise, had best forget her. But I went at a walk down the avenue, my head sunk on my breast, keen pain in my heart.

I pulled myself together on the highroad, set spurs to my horse and galloped back to the city. The officer on guard at Thomond Bridge, whom I knew well, looked at me as at a stranger. I cursed him under my breath and rode straight to the castle. There I dismounted and asked to see

M. de Boisseleau. Being told that he was in the council room, I climbed the stair and told the aid-de-camp in the anteroom my errand. He regarded me coldly as I spoke; then, without answering, went to the door, opened it and disappeared. In three minutes he returned and informed me in an official tone that M. de Boisseleau would hear what I had to say for myself.

I approached the door and entered the room. It was a round chamber, lighted by one deep-sunk window in the daytime and now illumined by a hanging lamp. Boisseleau, the Duke of Berwick and three officers of rank were seated at supper. I had heard them talking loudly while I was waiting outside. On my entrance they fell silent and turned their eyes upon my face.

I saluted and said that I had heard there was a charge against me for disobedience to orders, and that if the Duke of Berwick and M. de Boisseleau would allow me, I would explain how I had been misled by O'Brien.

An unpleasant silence followed my words, then Berwick, having whispered something to De Boisseleau, answered in a cold tone:

"We will hear your story, M. le Capitaine," he said, speaking in French.

I replied in the same language, and began my tale. I told all that had occurred that night, omitting alone the incident of the rider who had crossed our path. They heard me without asking a question or making a comment, keeping an ominous silence. When I had done M. de Boisseleau told me to give up my sword.

"I place you under arrest," he said. "As a concession to the public rejoicing we might have pardoned your neglect to carry out an order, but the second charge preferred against you is too serious to admit of mercy. The Duke of Berwick, therefore, orders your arrest on the charge that you are a traitor and have had communication with the enemy."

I unbuckled my sword and gave it to the aide-camp. Then I looked at the group.

"Messieurs, I am no traitor," I said steadily. "I have held no communication with the enemy. But there is a traitor in the army, and his guilt I hope to prove."

They heard me with cold faces. There had been one or two cases of suspected treachery, and they meant to make an example of the first man whose guilt was proved. I knew that the charge against me must have been supported by lies, for

no act of mine could afford the slightest evidence. M. de Boisseleau signed to the aid-de-camp to lead me from the room, and I went out, feeling neither shame nor fear. In the anteroom I gave the officer Lady Honoria's letter and asked him to send it to Sarsfield. He took it in silence, then called two of the guard and ordered them to take me to a room in the opposite tower. The men led me down the stair and across the yard. A few minutes later I found myself in a small round room near the roof.

I was left in darkness, but found a bench upon which I flung myself. Confident of proving my innocence, my arrest did not trouble me much. Moreover, worn out by a long and trying day, sleep soon came to my eyes.

Daylight was in the room when I opened them again. I had been aroused by a hand on my shoulder, and turning my head saw Bess Hinks by my side.

I sat up and stared at her, and casting her eyes on the floor she drew back under my gaze. She wore the habit of a nun, but had thrown back her veil. Her slack lips were red as holly berries, her cheeks too brilliant a hue. Her drooping lids were large, too large, they seemed, for her prominent eyes.

"Lud, sir," she exclaimed, "you are vastly amazed to see me. And I have risked much to come hither." She played with her thin fingers. "By my modesty, sir, only the most profound fears have led me to your prison. You are about to die."

I did not move. "Who admitted you?" I asked.

"A very civil gentleman, the officer of the guard. I told him that I had been summoned to attend to the wounded in the castle."

"And he believed you?"

"Oh, most readily, sir."

"He saw the direction you took, to the prison of an unwounded man?"

She gave me a sidelong glance. "Oh, sir, I deceived him." She smiled, and wagged her head.

"And the soldier who led you hither, Bess Hinks?"

She laughed a sly and empty laugh. "And the soldier, too."

"For what have you come?" I demanded.

"Lud, young man, to save you! You are to be shot at sundown."

I eyed her in thought for a minute. "What is your plan?" I asked.

She played with her fingers again before she answered. "Lieutenant Cole, whom you helped to escape, has heard in the King's camp of your danger, and he will save you. You must write a few words, sir, to say that you will meet him on your escape at the ruined house that stands beyond the walls. I am about to meet Lieutenant Cole at noon. I shall bring you a monk's habit."

"And if I do not write the letter?"

"Ah, then, sir, Lieutenant Cole will not help you. He must have written word before he risks venturing from the camp."

"One more question." I looked straight into her china blue eyes. "Why do you take this risk?"

She hesitated a moment. "Because" (she suddenly uttered an oath) "you helped me at the forge."

"You have met your kinsman, I suppose," I said, "and helped him to escape. Bess Hinks, I cannot write that note."

She frowned and the temper leaped into her face. But, controlling it, she smiled a moment later with eyes and lips. "Such a handsome young gentleman," she said. "To think that he must die!"

I rose from the bench, went to the door and knocked. It was presently opened and I saw that the sentry was a man I knew. "O'Byrne," I said, "the pious sister has strayed here by mistake. Escort her to the guard."

He looked sharply at the woman. "Your time is up," he said abruptly.

She lowered her veil and turned to me. "Consider, sir, that your end is near, and that that letter may save you."

I made no reply and led her to the door. She passed out slowly, fumbling again at her veil. I signed to O'Byrne to approach.

"Who is the officer on guard?" I asked.

"Captain Purcell, tigearna," he replied.

CHAPTER X

I KNEW then that Purcell had sent the woman, and that his malice would compass my ruin. I saw that I was face to face with disgrace and death. As I stood still listening to the steps going down the stair I heard O'Byrne's suddenly pause while the lighter ones went on. Then, after the interval of a minute, the man's followed and the echoes of his feet soon faded off.

In half an hour he returned, bringing me food. I asked him to send a message to Sarsfield, upon which he replied that the General was engaged at the breach which was being repaired. The man's air was friendly and respectful and it seemed to me that there was something on his mind that he wished to say. But I was too absorbed in the thought of my own position to question him.

At midday I heard steps and voices on the stair and, the bolts being withdrawn, O'Kavanagh came in.

"Sarsfield has sent me," he said as he advanced into the room. "He desires me to say that he

will help you, and that he does not believe the charge."

I felt much relieved at this message. To have been thought a traitor by the man whom the army adored, who was the soul of honor himself, would have completed my despondency. Yet I was aware that his power to help me was limited. His popularity with the Irish nation had aroused Berwick's jealousy.

"You are to be tried at sundown," continued O'Kavanagh. "What witnesses can you bring?"

I had none except Galloping Hogan and Mor, and I told him so. He looked at me with a sudden arrested gaze. "My God! Iveagh, have you no others?"

"No others that I can call," I observed.

"Do you know the charge in full? No, I see you do not." He paused, and I bade him tell me what he knew.

We stood by the barred window facing each other. The light was on his features, and even in my own anxiety I noticed how wretched and despondent he looked. He seemed to have placed a restraint upon himself, his eyes met mine with a strange, fixed gaze.

"The charge is this," he said. "You were seen to leave the redoubt beyond St. John's Gate by Purcell, MacMahon and others on the night of Sarsfield's ride. When warned of the risk you ran you replied that you went to reconnoitre; you were under no order to do so, and you returned with Mor Ni Cohane. When you took Cole prisoner you allowed him to keep a paper which must have been of importance, as he was prepared to die rather than yield it. You had lost heavily at cards, yet you gave Cole gold at Lord Brittas's ball. You had also given him parole, which you were not empowered to do. You spoke to Mor at the door and brought her into the house. Berwick knows that she helped Cole to escape. When taken prisoner you were set free by the enemy, and met Cole in a ruined church. You ordered some Rapparees to take him across the river. This information is given by a woman, wife or widow of a soldier of Kirke's Foot, who is now in the city. All this evidence will weigh against you. Hogan's word will not be taken; Mor's story is useless."

"Mor entered the house to warn Ethne Ni Brien of the order I had received," I said. "You know that."

"Yes, I know it," he replied, "for Ethne came to me. I intend to tell that at the court martial."

"And ruin yourself?" I said. "Besides, you cannot make such a statement. You would betray Ethne."

"No," he spoke swiftly. "I shall say Mor came to me."

I looked at him for a moment. "That will only bring two men to their death instead of one," I said.

He smiled curiously. After a pause he crossed the room to the door, and I thought he was about to leave me, when suddenly he stopped, appeared to think, and returned.

"Iveagh," he said impressively, "Cole feared you as a rival. It is his hands behind the guns that will shoot you."

"I do not believe it," I said. "The hand is Purcell's. Cole is a man of honor."

"He is your murderer," he answered. "He saw Ethne did not love me, and he feared you."

I shook my head. "The young Sassenagh is a good Sassenagh. Purcell desires my ruin."

O'Kavanagh made no answer. He walked to the door and this time left me.

I prepared myself now for the worst. Yet I

felt too full of life to give up hope. In their desire to make an example, I knew that Berwick and De Boisselean would show me no mercy, unless I could bring the clearest proof that the charge was false. And where should I find that proof? Purcell was the traitor; that I believed from my soul. But I had no evidence to bring. The Prince of Orange had not mentioned a name when he addressed me in the camp. O'Brien had warned me of my danger; but O'Brien was a traitor himself, and followed the fortunes of the Prince. Bess Hinks was in Purcell's pay, and would swear to any lie. Besides which she had seen me with Cole; when questioned on that point I should not be able to deny it. Neither would I explain that I believed the letter that Cole carried was one given him by a woman. Ethne, as niece to a traitor, would stand in some danger if it were known that she had held any communication with Cole. And, alas, she was about to meet him again. Like the charge of theft preferred against me by O'Donnell and his friends, the charge that I was a traitor led me to a point where a woman was involved. Gloomy forebodings filled my mind yet I determined to make a fight for my life.

A guard of soldiers entered my room about five o'clock that evening and told me to accompany them. Their manner was respectful, and I saw that these men did not believe in my guilt. On leaving the tower they halted in the archway, as if expecting some one. This gave me an opportunity to look about me, and my attention was drawn to a corner of the yard by a woman's angry voice. There I saw O'Byrne engaged in defending himself from the attacks of Bess Hinks. Divested of her nun's disguise, she now flaunted a bright colored dress and her face was flushed with passion. Clutching him by the arm, she tried to strike him on the mouth, but he warded off the blow by holding his free arm before his face. In the midst of the struggle Purcell crossed the yard and ordered him not to touch the woman.

"Ma's ead! I would not, Captain!" the man answered. "But I have enough of the Bearla (English) to know that she is giving me a name I never yet had."

"He is a thief! A filthy thief! A low, cursed Irishman!" screamed the woman, and turned her head towards Purcell.

O'Byrne seized the opportunity to escape. With a sudden wrench he freed himself from her

grasp and fled across the yard, followed by shouts of laughter from the soldiers. Bess Hinks did not pursue; at some words from Purcell she swiftly left the yard.

He walked towards my guard. "The court has not yet formed," he said to the corporal in command. "But keep the prisoner here." He then turned to me.

"My Lord Iveagh," he said in his thin, sharp voice, "I regret to see you in so serious a position. There are grades in infamy, and a man may be a thief without being a traitor."

I appeared not to hear his words, keeping my eyes haughtily aloof from his face. But, unabashed, he went on:

"I bear you no personal malice," he said in a high tone so that others besides my guard, I thought, might hear him. "You showed the recklessness and audacity of youth during your service in Connacht, and those qualities placed you high in the favor of a very gallant officer who has not yet reached supreme command. This is a time of sifting and trial to many men. The King's cause is less hopeful than his loyal subjects wish, and some of us bend before temptation. Your lands in the North await an owner, the

Prince of Orange is lavish with gifts to those Irishmen who join his side. But, unfortunately, my lord, you chose agents who have betrayed you, and instead of the lordship of the MacGuinness country you are to be given an ounce of lead."

He turned away and went into the tower. By stationing me in the archway I knew that he meant that I should be an object for the soldiers' gaze. He dared not have treated me thus at another time. But in the condition of the city, and the distraction of the chief officers, overwhelmed as they were with work, he was able to indulge in his petty spite. The men, however, acted with a chivalry and courtesy that took the sting from his act. Not a soldier looked in my direction; and my guards' faces showed that they resented the order.

As we stood thus a number of persons began to gather about the gate. They cheered for Sarsfield and the army. A piper who stood among them played a war march on his pipes. The sentry paused in his beat to listen; a certain license I guessed being allowed the citizens since the previous day. My guard soon exchanged jokes with the crowd; and in a few minutes I saw Galloping Hogan emerge from a group of men whose gaze

had been fixed upon me and enter the gateway. Being well known to the garrison, he was permitted to remain. But he was swiftly joined by others who seized and shook the soldiers' hands. Presently I found myself pushed apart from my guards, and it flashed before me that I was to be rescued. A huge smith shoved me outward, where other men laid hold of me and forced me into the street. But as flight would imply that I was guilty, I was about to neglect the opportunity offered, when some one grasped my arm, and a voice, Hogan's, whispered in my ear: "Tigearna, come! the boys will keep back the guard!"

"But the Duke—Sarsfield—all will think me guilty!" I exclaimed.

"Better that than death," he answered. "But you will prove your innocence yet!"

I hesitated no longer and followed him down the street. Presently a door was thrown open and we ran through the house and out into a lane. Winding in and out among a series of lanes and entries we reached a deserted looking and half roofless building standing by the wall. Pushing open a door fastened by one hinge to the post, we entered the place, and went up a ladder to a small room where several men were drinking. Their

pikes and muskets were stacked in a corner, and I recognized among the group the three Rapparees who had taken Cole across the river. All rose as we came in and welcomed me with so much respect and feeling that I knew that I was among friends. Cups were filled and handed to me, but Hogan motioned them back, and, opening a bottle of French wine, filled a horn.

"Your health, MacGuinness of Iveagh!" he said, and gave me the horn. "Boys," he looked at the men, "has the lad been here again?"

He was told that the person whom he inquired about had not been to the house; and as they spoke I went to the window and looked out. A marsh covered with willows and reeds spread before from the wall to the river. The twilight was gathering; the place looked gloomy and solitary. I was presently joined by Hogan, who said that he and his friends did not think it would be safe for me to remain in the city, and that when it was dark he would take me to the opposite shore. I should run there but little danger from the enemy's pickets. Driven from their trenches and defeated in their assault on the city, the foe sat now in sulkily silence in their camp.

As soon, therefore, as night fell, the scout and I,

helped by the Rapparees, lowered ourselves by a rope from the window. A moon showed now and then through the drifting clouds, and making our way through the osiers and reeds, we got into a small boat and rowed across the river. On landing, Hogan pointed to a dark mass at the end of the field and told me to remain while he returned to the city. He would be with me by dawn, he said, and gave me a loaded pistol.

As he rowed back to King's Island, I walked towards the ruin. When some yards off I stumbled over a débris of stones and mortar—a fallen wall. On crossing I was again brought up by numerous stumps that covered the ground; the remains of a wood. The building seemed familiar to me even in the uncertain light. As I climbed through a broken window, I recognized my position; I was in the house where I had searched for the cross. The orchard had been cut down and the ruins had been used as a shelter by the foe when advancing their trenches.

On this discovery I determined to seek the room in which the cross had been left. This I did with comparative ease, a great deal of the débris having been removed by the troops. Pausing in the doorway, I waited till the moon should emerge

from the clouds which had obscured it for the time. The room lay black before me, not an outline to be traced. As I stood still by the post, I had suddenly a consciousness that I was not alone and that some other presence was there hidden by the darkness. Once or twice I thought I heard a sigh, but it was only the breeze. Then again I caught the flutter of wings, and something swept by my face. I knew it was a bat, and I tried to strike it as it came by once more and vanished into the room. Presently the darkness grew less dense and objects vague as shadows began to emerge into view. A minute later a wave of misty light broke through gaps in the roof and flooded the centre of the room, leaving the sides and corners dark and gray. Then right in that silvery light I saw the figure of a man lying face downward on the floor.

It took me but a moment to reach the spot. Turning the body round I looked at the face. It was that of Cole, and the boy was dead, shot through the back. Yet I tore open his coat and laid my hand over his heart; it had ceased to beat. As a fear—a horror, seized me, I laid him down on the floor. Here, then, he and Ethne were to have met, and he, first at the tryst, had been killed.

He had been murdered. The attitude in which he had fallen told me that. The ball had entered the lung from the back and killed him at once. Suddenly O'Kavanagh's face rose before me as I last had seen it, and I believed that he had done the deed. Love had made him mad, and he had taken his rival's life. I felt stunned, horrified.

After a time I took note of sounds; those from the enemy's camp and those from the city. A shower of rain fell; the wind rose in a sudden gust. The drops pattered on the flags, beating noisily on the floor of the room, mingling there with the blood. Then I heard voices whispering in the hall and a light step approached.

The girl had come, and I must prevent her from seeing the dead. I turned softly and went into the hall. I could just make out her figure as she groped forward.

"What a night!" she exclaimed in English. "If it were not for what you bring I would not be here."

It was Ethne's voice, and the sound made me throw off, as it were, the horror that I had felt. I felt suddenly nerved and alert and determined to keep her from the room.

"I bring nothing," I answered. "I am not the man whom you expect."

I saw her stop short; and we stood looking at each other in that vague glimmer that was not light, but darkness through which forms were visible.

"Who brought you here?" she said suddenly.

I told her; she did not speak for some seconds.

"Then you have escaped! And you have come here to prevent my interview." There was a note of half inquiry, half scorn in her voice.

"Not so, on my honor," I answered. "Hogan brought me to this ruin."

"If that is true you shall be present at my interview," she replied, and approached the doorway.

I placed myself before her. "Cole is not coming to-night," I said. "He has gone."

She paused and I saw that she tried to read my face. "Gone," she said, after a brief silence. "Has he been here? Have you met him?"

"Yes. I have met him. He has been called away. The Prince of Orange is about to retire."

"Oh, but he would have waited for me! Unless —— Did he give it to you?"

There was a note in her tone that made a new

man of me as I heard it. I felt no longer as if hounding unseen forces were driving me on to ruin. I could meet Fate and defy it.

"He gave me nothing," I said.

"Then—then you have not seen him!" she answered, her voice changing. "He has not come! You deceive me! I will wait in this room."

She passed me before I could prevent her, and the next second I knew she had seen what I had wished to keep from her eyes. I heard her pause suddenly, gasp, then with a cry of horror cross the room.

I was by her side in a moment. "For God's sake, stand up!" I said. "He is dead."

But she felt his heart, his wrist; then she raised her head and looked at me. "You—you have killed him!" she said, tragically.

"No! Before the living God, no!" I answered. "I found him thus. I would have kept you from this sight. He has been murdered."

She rose slowly to her feet and her eyes seemed alone alive in her white face. I thought she was about to faint and put my arm about her. But she drew herself away with a shudder. Suddenly she sank on her knees again and covered her face with her hands.

Some one entered the room at the same moment. It was Mor. She went up to the girl. Crossing herself, she muttered a prayer as she looked at Cole.

"Alanna, it was to be," she whispered. "I read it on the hand that did it. God have mercy on the young man's soul!"

Ethne raised her head. "Mor,"—she pointed to me—"did you read it on his hands?" Her voice carried shame, misery, fear.

"Mor," I exclaimed, and my tone was bitter, "do not answer. If Ethne Ni Brien will not believe my word she shall not learn the truth from you."

"Mo bron! mo bron!" the old woman replied, "but there is pride on you, MacGuinness of Iveagh! Is truagh! for the kindly dead! and is truagh! for the foolish man of the living! Acushla, it is not on his hands."

The girl arose. She went swiftly past me, weeping as she went. A fear again seized me that the dead man had her love. I dared not follow. Presently Mor came to my side.

"My son," she said, "go to the young Sassenagh—Christ have mercy on his soul!—and search his body, for he has O'Donnell's cross."

I started and looked down at the withered face.

"Do you mock me, Mor Ni Cohane?" I said.

"It is a true word, avic. Look well, for he carries the cross." I did not move, astonished, unbelieving, and she went on.

"Have you forgotten?" she spoke impatiently. "Have you forgotten, son of my fathers' lords! Little is the sense at you! And I must be laughing at your folly! Here is the story. She went out in danger to find the cross for pity and love of Sarsfield's wife. And she heard voices, and hid behind the rafters in this room. Two came in, Sassenagh soldiers, and they two were brothers. And the ill-luck upon them! they found the iron box and took out the cross, and went from the house. From a window Ethne Ni Brien saw them come to a dispute, and when one brother turned from the other, that other took his life with his dirk and obtained the cross. And she followed—great was her courage—and some of the villains got her; but I was near—glory to God, I was near—and when they left her at a tree for a minute I slipped into her place. And you took her back to the city. Then in the trouble that was upon her and upon the noble wife of

Padraig Sarsfield, she thought of him who lies here. And they met, and he pledged his word that he would help her. My grief! my grief! how low the generous stranger lies, how low to-day!"

My incredulity gave way to belief. The thought that Ethne, whom I had dared to doubt, was true, filled me with joy, shame, contrition. I turned to find her. Mor caught my arm.

"You must not seek her yet," she said. "Leave the colleen in peace awhile. Great is her trouble."

I felt a pang of jealousy again, and paused. Mor urged me with some vehemence to search the body, and after a moment's hesitation I approached it.

The moon became obscured as I stood by the dead boy. I waited till it shone once more before I looked for the cross. Then, having examined the pockets and belt, I opened the coat at the breast, but could not find the jewel. After a few minutes' search I came to the conclusion that he had not brought it. Leaving the body I went into the hall to acquaint Ethne with this fact.

The place was empty, and I called for Mor. But no voice answered. I wandered from one

room to another, groping my way in the dark, but I heard neither breath nor movement. Ethne had fled and Mor had followed her. I went back to the hall and finding some stones and wood, made a seat and sat down.

For two hours or more I sat there torn by thought. Every now and again I seemed to hear some half smothered sound within the room. Once or twice my fancy conjured up the figure of a man standing rigid in the shadows. The bats fluttered in and out, an owl swept with a shriek past my head and passed into the night.

I must have slept towards dawn, for I was suddenly aroused from a dream, in which I had spoken to Ethne and Cole, O'Kavanagh and Fitzgerald. I drew the pistol from my belt and sprang to my feet. Two figures stole out of the darkness and came towards me and I recognized the forms of Hogan and one of his men. He told me that some movement was taking place in the enemy's camp, and that he thought the guns were being drawn off.

"It will be well for you to remain here," he said, "till I come back to you again. I am waiting for one from the camp who has not yet arrived."

I asked him who this person was, but he did

not answer. I saw that he and his companion carried spades; and after a few moments' silence they went into the room. Presently they came out and went to the back of the house. A minute later I heard the spades at work.

When the grave was ready they returned and carried out the body. We stood silent for a minute, when it had been placed in the grave, a prayer on our lips. Then the clay was shoveled back and the place filled in. The dawn had come as the task was finished. I looked at Hogan in the chill gray light.

"Who did it?" I asked, and pointed to the grave.

"It is not a knowledge with me who did it, tigearna," he replied, slowly. "But it was one of two."

"And their names?" I said.

"It is not well to say the names. It was willed by God. Let it be."

As I did not answer he continued, "And now, thank God, MacGuinness of Iveagh, one shame is taken from you; the other, too, shall pass."

"What shame?" I asked.

"You have the cross," he said, "give it to Padraig Sarsfield's noble-born wife."

"I have not got it," I replied. "The English boy did not bring it."

The man stared at me in the white dawn for some moments. "That is bad news," he said at last. "Bad news—alas, the fear is on me that it will never be found now."

I fell silent again. Whatever tale Cole had to tell had perished on his lips, and the disappearance of the cross would never be explained. He had failed to get it from Hinks and had come to confess the fact to Ethne. The charge of theft would follow me abroad. The story would be told wherever Irish soldiers met. In the armies of the King of Spain, in those of the Emperor, in King Louis's brigades, all the Irish exiles who fought for foreign kings would hear and repeat the tale of my shame. But mingled with this bitter thought was the knowledge that Ethne knew the truth.

CHAPTER XI

THE hours that followed the departure of the two men dragged slowly by. Rain fell frequently, and banks of brown and gray clouds swept across the sky. Now and again a white gleam showed where the sun sought to shine through the vapor. In the enemy's camp the preparations for departure continued. The guns were drawn off by strings of oxen, accompanied by large bodies of troops. I could see the moving masses sometimes vaguely through the rain, at other moments dark and compact with glistening weapons.

Hogan had brought me food, so that I did not suffer from hunger. I was anxious for his return, planning at one time to go back to the city, and again that I would seek shelter in the mountains. Reconnoitring from a window that faced the river, I saw that the wall and redoubts were manned, and that our men watched the movements of the enemy. Some firing was kept up for a time, and occasionally a ball struck the

house. Impatient and anxious, I paced from room to room, careless whether I was seen through the wide gaps in the walls. Once I ventured out and looked at the new-made grave, and in a moment of bitterness took Providence to task. Night fell at last, and the moon rose among clouds. The firing had ceased and flames sprang up in the camp. The loud explosion told that the enemy had blown up their stores; I heard the tramp of regiments, the roll of wheels, bugle calls, loud shouts. Then the trotting of horse, even, unbroken, commenced, and went on into the south. It continued for an hour, as the mass of cavalry streamed away. The light from the burning camp gave me fitful gleams of moving bodies, of black and shadow-like figures.

As I watched the retreat Hogan returned. He told me that it was impossible to get to the mountains that night as the roads and passes were blocked by the retiring troops. Our men were about to cross the breach and seize the camp, and it was no longer safe to remain in the ruin. He advised me to return to the city, and lie hidden for a time in the house by the wall.

"We shall clear your name yet of a black lie, tigearna," he said, "even though the cross is lost!"

He spoke with an air of confidence which struck me as assumed. Like a faithful clansman he wished to cheer the spirits of his chief, but in his own heart knew that what he said had little chance of being realized. However my own inclination was to return to the city. I desired to see Ethne again ; I felt, too, as if I wished to face my accusers rather than fly from their presence. I even began to hope, thinking that Sarsfield, idol of the army as he was, might be able to befriend and save me.

We left the ruin and went to the river. The night suddenly grew white in the east as we paused on the bank. Some large building had caught fire in the camp, and the flames mounting high sent their reflection afar. Men could be seen pouring from the breach and gates, their faces lit up in the fierce glare. The light flashed on weapons ; shouts of triumph were borne across the night. From the burning building cries came ; howls of fear, of agony. Then some of our soldiers rushed—small distant figures—towards the spot. Another minute and they were carrying the wounded from the flames, risking their own lives to save those of their foes.

“That is the hospital,” said Hogan. “But

come, tigearna, it is but lost time to look at that scene."

We entered the boat and pushed out into the river. In a few moments we were beyond the reach of the glare, moving under inky clouds over a black water. A dark outline of bushes showed the point towards which we rowed. Beyond the osiers and reeds a light here and there told where the wall stood. As we drew near the shore I realized again my position. An escaped prisoner, I was returning to the city from which I had fled. Berwick was supreme in the council, he and De Boisseleau would show me short shrift should I be recognized and arrested. Then I drove fear from my heart and sprang upon the bank.

We pushed through the willows till we reached firmer ground. I could see the high wall and the black outline of roofs. A dark form moved on the rampart. Some one carrying a lantern challenged us, having heard our movement through the reeds and osiers. Hogan answered and the figure and light passed on. Presently we stopped beneath the house where I had met the Rapparees, and my companion threw a stone at the shuttered window. It was opened after a brief delay, and a rope let down. In a few

minutes I found myself again among the men whom I had seen on the previous night. One of them spoke to Hogan, who remained below the rampart, and then shut the window, lit a candle and offered me food.

As I ate and drank I conversed with the party, who all seemed impatient to be gone. One by one they left the room, and I heard them go down the ladder. They were hastening to the pillage of the camp, and each man before he left assured me that I was quite safe in the house. I looked round the room when alone. There was a recess in the corner, where a number of English, Dutch and Danish uniforms had been flung; weapons, too, had been tossed on the heap. A jar of uisgebagh and some oaten bannocks were on a shelf near the recess. The house appeared deserted, and on opening the door the candle-light showed me a narrow passage, with a broken floor, a trap-door and a ladder. Further on I found two empty rooms, with floors so sunken and unsafe that I did not venture upon them. The noise and shouts in the street came faintly to my ears, and I felt tempted to go out and join the crowds. Once or twice I thought of disguising myself by putting on one of the suits belonging

to the Rapparees that lay on the heap. But prudence held me back. As I handled a big frieze cloak a stone struck the shutter. I listened, and the blow came again. Remembering that the men had shown no light when they admitted me, I extinguished the candle before I removed the bar.

It was pitch dark as I looked out. I could see neither the river nor the outline of the willows. The sheer face of the wall seemed to go down into a black abyss. The wind had sunk, the moon had set, and the stars were hidden under a blanket of clouds. The silence lasted a minute. "Hogan," a voice whispered, a thin young voice, "are you there?"

"Hogan is not here," I answered; "what do you want?"

"Are you one of his men?" the voice replied.

A sudden thought seized me. "Yes. Are you the lad he expected?"

"I am. Throw out the rope and be quick."

I felt about the sill and found that the rope was fastened to a ring. Then I put on the cloak, flung off my periwig, and tied a scarf round my head. I had noticed a felt hat on the heap: after groping a minute I got it and clapped it on the scarf.

I heard the boy muttering impatiently over my delay as I flung out the rope. I hauled him in without much difficulty, as he was of light weight, and now and again put his feet in notches in the wall. As he climbed into the room he spat at me like a cat.

"You slow-witted fool!" he said, in a high, reedy voice. "Do you not know the king is retiring, and I must see the gentleman at once?"

I took my cue from his tone and begged his pardon. "Do you know the gentleman's quarters?" I said.

"Has he changed them?" he asked sharply.

"Oh, no; he is in the same place," I replied.

"Then follow me," he said. "You may be wanted. Strike a light."

I obeyed, thinking my disguise sufficient. As a flare sprang up I saw a thin face with crooked eyes turned towards where I stood. A long horseman's cloak covered the lad's slim figure; it seemed to me that I had seen his face before.

"Are you on our side?" he said in a high, quick tone. His oblique eyes peered suspiciously in my direction.

I swore gruffly. "If I were not, it is not here Hogan would have left me," I replied,

He gave a short, nervous laugh. "Then come," he said, and left the room.

I followed, carrying the candle, and we went down the ladder. Suddenly I knew where I had seen him before. He was the youth Cecil, whom I had taken by force from Cloona on the night we had gone to capture the guns. Sarsfield had kept him a prisoner till we had recrossed the Shannon, when he had disappeared. The discovery was important. I had found through him, I believed, a clue to the real traitor.

This hope lessened as the thought flashed through my mind that the lad had been in O'Brien's service, and that Hogan had been expecting to meet him. It was probable that he was but a messenger sent by the uncle to the niece. That, in fact, he carried a letter for Ethne, which he was to have placed in Hogan's hands. I hesitated for a moment whether I should follow him.

However, the hope of meeting Ethne soon decided my course. Extinguishing the light, I went after him into the street. He led the way with a quick step, in spite of the darkness, and we soon emerged into a second street, where we met groups of persons carrying torches. Thence we passed into a narrow entry, and after walking through a

number of lanes and streets the boy halted before a house. I could vaguely see its black walls rising into the black night; it seemed to me not unknown.

Opening the door, he went in, and we groped our way up a stair. A faint line of light showed under a door. The boy stopped.

"Wait here, Rapparee!" he said in a tone that made me ache to box his ears.

The next second he tapped at the door. There was no reply, and he turned the handle and went into the room. In a moment I knew where I was—in the house of the rampart, where so many of my comrades lodged. The light through the doorway showed me the familiar apartment where we had gamed and diced and held our revels; the room, too, where I had been charged with the theft of the cross. My pulses beat quicker; I saw now that heaven had not forgotten me.

The place was empty; not an officer was to be seen. Cecil had come to meet some one who knew that the house would be deserted. I saw him look round the room, then, approaching the light, draw a letter from his breast. He looked up, a caitiff's air about him, his crooked eyes angry, suspicious.

In the pause I heard some one enter the house, and I drew back beyond the ray of light. A man's step sounded on the stair, and the feet came up quickly. Another minute and a small, slight figure darted past the shadows and went into the room. Though the hat was drawn over the face, I knew it was Purcell.

He shut the door and I crept up to the keyhole. I could only hear the murmur of voices within without distinguishing any words. For a minute I thought of breaking into the room and of charging Purcell with his treachery. Then a wiser plan rose before me. I would hasten into the street, summon the first respectable citizens I met, and return with them to the house. I should thus have witnesses to his guilt.

I left the door and went softly down the stair. The darkness in the hall seemed to have increased. I felt my way slowly towards the exit. Presently my hand touched the door leading into the street; it was locked and the key was gone.

For a few moments I stood still, aware that I was trapped. Then I turned and walked up the stair, holding my pistol in my hand. Purcell had locked the door as a precaution; he could not have known of my presence. Standing beyond where

the light would fall when the door was opened, I waited, determined to take the letter from him.

After an interval the boy came out. "Rap-paree!" he called in his thin, derisive voice. "Where are you? Here, you loafing kerne, you are wanted."

I stepped forward and passed him, meaning to deal with him later. As I entered the room Purcell looked at me with eyes that showed no recognition. My disguise was, then, better than I had thought, and I decided not to reveal myself at once.

"Are you Hogan's man?" he demanded.

I replied in an assumed voice that I was. "Then, find Captain O'Kavanagh," he said calmly, "and bring him hither."

Here was the opportunity I wanted. I could leave the house, summon the men and have Purcell arrested. I turned to obey.

I walked with a swift step towards the door. I saw the path of light on the passage, the stair, the white face of the boy. Then I saw no more. A weight fell on my head, something cold, dealt with tremendous force, and I sank forward, felled by the blow.

I was alone when I recovered and daylight was

in the room. A candle guttered in its socket, still alight. I sat up and looked around. Rising to my feet, I walked dizzy, half stupefied, to a table upon which a jug of water stood. I lifted it to my lips and drank. My next impulse was to approach the door; it was locked. Then I thought of my pistol, but it was gone. I went back to one of the chairs and sat down.

My mind gradually cleared as I waited. My rearrest was now imminent; my trial would be swift; I should be shot. As this thought grew fixed my mind played round it, as round some black, irremovable fact. I began to regard myself as a dead man, and was conscious of some faint surprise at my own indifference. After a time I became aware that all my half-awakened powers were concentrated upon one thing. I was listening. The silence in the room, the house, was ever on the verge of being broken. A battalion of sounds, steps, voices waited without to pierce it.

Yet when the men entered they did so without my having heard their approach. I raised my head and looked at them as at soundless shadows. They were Baldearg O'Donnell, O'Carroll, Brigadier Talbot, Purcell, quite a group of well-known faces. A file of soldiers stood by the threshold;

I remember I rose. Then some one—Brigadier Talbot, I think—ordered my arrest. In another minute the guard was leading me from the room.

The fresh air in the street brought me back to life. I began to take measure of things. Suddenly the folly of my silence struck me; I should have charged Purcell with his guilt. I cried out to the soldiers to return. But the men told me that they dared not and that they were taking me to the castle. Presently they stopped by an arch and one of them gave me a draught of *aqua vitæ*. I looked in the man's face and recognized O'Byrne.

On reaching the castle I was placed in my former prison. I was brought food, but could not eat. Lying down on the bench I fell asleep. When I awoke two hours later the effects of the blow had passed, and I felt well and strong. My guards soon after came in and told me that the court was formed, and bade me accompany them. I at once braced myself for the trial, and went out to fight for my life.

The court martial was held in the council room. As I walked in between the soldiers I saw that I was to be tried not only before the Duke of Berwick and M. de Boisseleau, but Sarsfield, Lutterel, Talbot and several other prominent officers. Pur-

cell stood on one side, his air cool, assured. Standing with MacMahon of the artillery, who was one of the witnesses against me, I beheld to my surprise O'Kavanagh. His expression was tranquil, he did not look like a man with murder on his hands.

The charge of treason was read aloud and I pleaded not guilty. MacMahon was then called and told that I had gone towards the enemy's camp on the night of Sarsfield's expedition, and had later returned with the old woman Mor. I did not question him. The two men of my own troop who had seen me with Cole were the next witnesses. They answered the questions reluctantly, but when they retired there was no doubt among those present that I had left an important paper in Cole's possession. The sentry at Lord Brittas's ball gave evidence that I had admitted Mor to the house. After that a deposition was read, made by Bess Hinks. In this the baggage swore that I had been released from the castle by the captain of her husband's regiment, and that I had met Cole in the ruins of a church and had ordered some Rapparees to take him across the river. Purcell was then summoned and stepped forward with an air so cool and audacious that, believing

as I did in his guilt, I felt astonished at his impudence. He spoke of his acquaintance with the traitor O'Brien and boldly stated that O'Brien had asked him to desert and join the Prince of Orange.

"I need not tell Your Grace nor the Court," he continued in the quiet level tone of a man conscious of his integrity, "that I turned with scorn from the proposal. I have now to swear before the court that O'Brien told me that a cavalry officer of rank, driven through need, was in the pay of the Prince. I asked the name, and he told me he was a nobleman in Sarsfield's horse. I then guessed the man, and determined to watch him. I saw that he had an understanding with the English prisoner at my Lord Brittas's house. It is well known that he spared O'Brien's life, and I can produce a written statement by a young man, one of O'Brien's personal attendants, that Lord Iveagh met the Prince of Orange in the enemy's camp, that the Prince spoke to him, that they came to terms, and that Lord Iveagh's escape was connived at, the prisoner binding himself to communicate all matters of importance to Orange."

He was asked by General Sarsfield to produce the paper. This was the document upon which I had placed such hope given him by the lad. For

the first time since my arrest I felt a horror at the thought of death. Ethne knew the truth and Sarsfield's wife, but those witnesses I could not call. I watched Purcell put his hand in his belt, fascinated, silent.

The pause was broken by O'Kavanagh's voice.

"M. de Boisseleau, Your Grace, Gentlemen of the Court," he said, "while Captain Purcell is searching for this paper let me say what I am prepared to state on oath later—that it was a letter from his English sweetheart that the prisoner was allowed to keep, and that it was I ——"

But he was interrupted. Boisseleau, as President of the Court, frowned upon him. "Silence, M. le Capitaine," he said, sharply. "This is out of order. You shall be called presently and then on oath can make your statement."

At the first sound of O'Kavanagh's voice Purcell had stopped in his search. Turning his head swiftly, he had regarded him with apprehensive eyes. Then, at M. de Boisseleau's reproof, he recovered himself, drew a paper rapidly from his pocket and with a forced smile gave it to Sarsfield. At the same moment some one spoke loudly outside the door. The sentry answered and the voice spoke again. It was Hogan's.

But my gaze hung upon Sarsfield. He opened the paper, read it and his face changed. Then he gave the letter to Boisseleau. In the tension of the minute I glanced at Purcell. His brief agitation had left no mark, his eyes shone with malignant triumph, as if confident of my condemnation.

The letter related to some significant, even overwhelming fact. This was evident from Boisseleau's expression. Some infernal chain of evidence dragging others, perhaps, into the charge, was written on its page. Boisseleau raised his eyes; there was a change of thought in his gaze. He handed the letter to Berwick, whose color deepened as he read. With knitted brows he returned the letter.

"Captain Purcell," said Boisseleau, "how did this paper come into your possession?"

"I will tell you, monsieur," said Purcell eagerly, delighted, I knew, to seal my doom. "It was sent by a youth named Cecil, formerly in O'Brien's service. Lieutenant Cole gave it to Cecil to deliver to the prisoner in a certain ruin outside the walls whither Iveagh had gone. Learning this through the scout Galloping Hogan, whose spies had tracked the boy and Cole, I went thither be-

fore the prisoner's arrival, seized the lad and took the letter. I found that the boy was ready to serve our side for a bribe. I, therefore, left him with instructions to persuade Iveagh to return to the city and take refuge for the night in our quarters, then deserted. He succeeded, and Iveagh came to the house where he was arrested this morning."

There was a brief silence, and I again heard Hogan's voice without. But the court's attention was fixed upon Purcell; no one heeded the noise at the door.

"M. le Capitaine," said De Boisseleau, "have you read this letter?"

Purcell gave a deprecating smile. "I ventured to glance at it," he said, smoothly, "knowing that it was to a traitor."

Boisseleau exchanged a glance with Berwick, and Sarsfield, with flashing eyes, stirred suddenly in his seat.

"M. le Capitaine," said Boisseleau, icily—and I wondered at his tone—"since you only glanced at the letter I will read it aloud, so that all present may be quite certain as to the traitor."

Purcell bowed. "Your decision, monsieur, is worthy of the court," he answered, easily.

De Boisseleau looked him in the face for a moment. Then in a loud tone he read :

“Sir, the King is about to raise the seige. It is my opinion that your wisest course is to remain with the rebels in order to learn their plans and acquaint us with them.

“Signed.

GENERAL DOUGLASS.”

Boisseleau paused, and I looked at Purcell. His face was white. He took a step forward with gaping jaw.

“Here is some further advice offered,” continued De Boisseleau, “given not by General Douglass, but by the traitor Manus O’Brien. He writes :

“‘TO CAPTAIN PURCELL :

“‘*Dear Friend*—Lieutenant Cole, if questioned and kept ignorant of your purpose, can give information which your ingenious mind can turn to your needs. But I advise you to leave matters as they are. For myself age has taught me that revenge is not only un-christian, but is a weapon like to recoil upon those who use it.

“‘MANUS O’BRIEN.’”

I stared round at the court, at the witnesses, at Purcell. I heard the latter cry out that the letter was a forgery—a lie ; that he had been tricked—deceived. As he was ordered to give up his sword there was a stir at the door and Hogan came in,

leading the boy Cecil, whose wrists were bound. I saw Berwick speak to De Boisseleau, and their eyes turned towards me. A minute later, at the command from the Duke, my guards led me from the room.

Was I to be acquitted? I felt choked with a passion of thoughts. There in the council room, before all who had heard the charge, my innocence should have been proclaimed! Instead of that I had been hustled forth, sent back to my cell. Rage held me for a time; I paced to and fro.

An hour later the door was unlocked and Hogan admitted. I stood still and looked at him, my heart hot, indignant. He came towards me with two strides and seized my hand.

"Ah, tigearna!" he exclaimed, and kissed it, "you are a free man—your life is your own."

He must have seen the passion in my face.

"With the blessing of God all will come well," he said. "Look, Niall MacGuinness, this is what I did. I knew that fox of the black heart meant your ruin, and I knew, too, that he held back with the enemy. So I found the boy, Cecil, and made friends with him, and let on to him that I was for Orange. It was well in my mind that he would bring letters, and I meant to capture him.

But I missed the whelp in the dark ; and my men went out to the burning camp when they should have watched for him. It was this morning I got him. And wasn't it the hand of God that made Purcell, the villain, give the letter that was for himself, instead of the one he had got written to you, and that he was going to swear was from Cole. But Padraig Sarsfield had a scrap of Cole's writing himself, and when the two were put together it was seen that it was a forgery. And the whelp is answering every question that De Boisseleau puts to him."

But my blood was still hot. "Why am I hidden away?" I demanded; "why am I not brought before the court?"

His face fell. "It is a hope with me that all will be right yet," he replied, avoiding my question. "Go to France for a time, Niall MacGuinness, and then those that would blacken your name will be put to shame by the fame and honor you will win for yourself in the wars."

Before I could answer one of the guard came in and told me to follow him to the presence of M. de Boisseleau. I went quickly, expecting now to have my name cleared before all those who had seen my shame. But instead of finding a

number of persons in the council room I beheld but M. de Boisseleau and the Duke. They regarded me with a cold and distant gaze as I saluted.

The Duke sat silent and rigid and I was addressed by M. de Boisseleau. He said that I was no longer a prisoner, the charge of treason preferred against me not having been proved. "You are free," he added, "to leave the city. His Majesty has no further need of your services."

My anger at this summary dismissal kept me silent for a few moments. Then I asked why His Majesty dismissed me from the army.

"Young man," said De Boisseleau, looking at me with a grave and dignified air, "it will be wisdom on your part to leave the matter unprobed. You have been given your liberty. My advice is that you go abroad, and that to some distant land."

I turned to Berwick. "I appeal to you, sir, my King's son; I appeal to you for justice."

"My Lord Iveagh," he answered haughtily, "but for that letter you would be now a dead man. Be thankful for your life and liberty!"

"Life and liberty without honor are small gifts," I said, my wrath bitter.

Boisseleau signed to me to retire, and I saluted and went out. I determined to seek Sarsfield; to demand the justice that was denied me. But in the street my mind changed; I remembered the cross, and knew that the shame of the theft still clung to my name. For Ethne's sake I must be silent, even if I had not given my word to Sarsfield's wife. Bitter in spirit I turned from the castle and walked towards the bridge. Presently I heard my name called, and looked back to see Hogan and Lady Honoria's servant.

I paused and the old man gave me a letter without uttering a word and then walked away. As I stood looking at it, Hogan asked me if I was going to stay in the city, as he knew where I would be welcome. Indifferent to my fate for the moment, anxious to read the letter, I bade him abruptly lead me to the place. He crossed the street to a house not far from the bridge, and we went in. A stout, rosy-faced woman showed me to a room on the first story, and having told me I was free to the best in the house, left me alone. Hogan followed her as soon as he had given me the information that the Duke of Tyrconnell, Lauzun and the French soldiers would enter the city on the morrow. They had lain

like rats in Galway during the siege and were now coming to join hands with Berwick after we had borne the brunt of the fight.

The moment I was alone I opened the letter. It was from Lady Honoria. She told me briefly that on the evening of the following day the chiefs of the army and the Duke de Lauzun, the Mayor and Councilors of the city would meet at her house, and asked me to be present, as Colonel O'Donnell would claim the cross. I flung the letter aside, feeling that she and Ethne cared nothing for my shame. Both believed that I had found the cross when I had searched Cole's body. Both were anxious to hide their own share in the story; Lady Honoria because she had been careless of her charge, and Ethne because she had every reason to wish for silence. She had met Cole alone, she had connived at his escape, she had been through adventures that slanderous tongues would delight to seize upon, she was O'Brien's niece.

The next day broke misty and chill. A pale sun shone at intervals through the dun colored clouds. From my window I watched the entry of the two dukes and the French troops. The broken roofs, the fallen walls, the traces of fire

and ball gave the city an air of desolation and ruin. But we were victors, and the garrison and citizens meant to show our triumph. Flags were flung out, windows decorated, and crowds gathered in the street. The Mayor and the Councilors stood near the bridge in their robes. Cavalry and infantry were stationed along the line to be followed by the French; Berwick, De Boisseleau, Sarsfield, surrounded by their staff, rode to the gate to meet them. Presently they came on the bridge, marching in double file, their weapons shining, their uniforms as fresh and unfaded as if they were about to pass under King Louis's eyes. And these people who had deserted us, carrying off stores and arms, showed no shame as they entered the city. They seemed, indeed, to think that their commendation of our stand was the highest praise that we could receive.

The Duke of Tyrconnell rode at their head, a stout old man, a partisan rather than a soldier, and now finally discredited with the army. Lauzun, the Frenchman, rode by his side, a small slight figure, vain, shallow and incompetent. But to me that magpie was the chief object in the procession. It was his insolent taunt that had made O'Donnell pledge the cross. Indirectly he

was the cause of my disgrace. I watched him as he passed by, a malediction on my lips.

Suddenly my eyes encountered O'Kavanagh. He was drawn up with his troop on the other side of the street. Some impulse I could not define made me turn abruptly from the window. I sat and brooded, listening to the tramp of hoofs and feet, the shouts and laughter of the crowd. In an hour's time the door opened, and with a clank of steel and tinkling of spurs O'Kavanagh strode into the room and walked up to me with outstretched hand.

I stood up, and put my hands behind my back. We looked at each other for a few moments.

"Cole has been murdered," I said, "and, my God, O'Kavanagh, before I touch your hand I must know that it is free from his blood."

His face suddenly blanched; "I did not kill him," he replied. "He won Ethne og, but I did not take his life."

I thought of Mor's prophecy, and I saw that he remembered it, too.

"There is no blood treacherously taken on these hands," he said, holding them out. "Farewell, Niall MacGuinness." He turned without another word and walked from the room.

I believed him and sprang after him, but he went swiftly down the stair, neither looking back nor replying to my call. At the street door I saw Hogan and beckoned to him. The man came and must have read the question in my eyes. He shook his head.

"Leave the dead alone, tigearna," he said. "It was one of two took the young Sassenagh's life."

"Purcell?" I looked straight into his face.

"Yes, it was Purcell," he said, and turned abruptly from me and went out of the house. A minute later he came back and saluted.

"It is a fine day, tigearna, too fine for those cursed French. The swine made a poor show coming into the city."

I saw that he meant to apologize for his abrupt departure, but I knew, too, that his lips were sealed. From him I was not to learn the mystery of Cole's murder.

My thoughts presently swung back again to the cross. The women thought I had it, and it was necessary to let them know their mistake. I hastened at once to Great Street and was admitted into the house. Preparations were being made for the reception that night, and I was led to a small room at the end of a passage that lay be-

yond the hall. After an interval of some minutes Lady Honoria appeared. I told her my errand.

Her face colored. "Then you did not find the cross?" she said, and looked distressed.

I repeated that I had not. She opened the door and I saw Ethne on the threshold. The girl looked cold and distant and barely bent her head as she came in. I returned her bow stiffly.

"MacGuinness of Iveagh has come to say that he has not found the cross," exclaimed Lady Honoria, and turned her face aside.

"I have come also, bean-uasal, to ask that I may be excused from appearing at your reception to-night."

She made no answer, and as if too distressed at my news to remain longer in the room, went out and closed the door. I looked at Ethne, whose eyes were on the ground.

"Have you deigned to listen, bean-uasal?" I did not move as I asked the question, standing with my plumed hat in my hand. "I shall not appear to-night."

"Then," her voice seemed as cold as her face, "then you will leave the wife of Sarsfield to meet the eyes of Lauzun and O'Donnell and the garrison alone."

"What comfort can my presence be to her, bean-uasal?"

"You can confess that you found the cross in your belt, that you replaced it in the box, that you took charge of it and lost it."

There was a moment's silence. "Ethne of the hearts, do you bid me do this?"

"Yes," she still kept her eyes lowered. "And your reward shall be that you have warded blame from General Sarsfield's wife."

"Bean-uasal, I shall come."

She looked up. "You will not tell them what I know. You will be silent?"

"Oh, silent as the dead, as Cole himself. I shall swear I am the thief."

She raised her hands suddenly with a gesture of grief, and turned and went swiftly from the room. I felt inclined to curse; these women thought alone of themselves; and Ethne's dainty foot was to press me deeper into the mire. But I was ready to be crushed and yet it was Cole whom she had loved.

CHAPTER XII

As I approached Sarsfield's house that night a coach bearing the three dukes, Berwick, Tyrconnell and Lauzun, rolled up. They were received by a guard of honor, but no one in the crowd cheered as the two latter alighted. Berwick received a fine ovation and looked pleased as he acknowledged the cheers. Immediately after their arrival the Mayor and his Councilors came up the street, and were received at the door by Sarsfield. When they had entered the house I made my way through the crowd and walked into the hall. The place was thronged with officers, both Irish and French. All expected Lauzun to acknowledge that night that he had underrated the courage of the men of Limerick as well as that of the garrison. I heard the subject of the wager commented on by the Frenchmen and many of the civilians. But the Irish officers of both horse and foot did not refer to the cross. I understood the reason of their silence, and grimly knew that I was to be the victim.

These men held aloof from me. The abortive court martial would have left them in doubt of my innocence, even if the stain of theft had not clung to my name. Purcell was the traitor, but the discovery of his guilt had not cleared me in the eyes of my comrades. Near the door of the reception room I saw O'Donnell, who threw me a haughty glance.

"MacGuinness of Iveagh," he said, "I would speak a word with you."

Expecting a challenge and glad at the thought, I stopped and faced him.

"I shall be delighted to have that word, Baldearg O'Donnell," I replied, and touched my sword.

He did not appear to notice the action. "My duty to-night," he said, lowering his voice, "is to shield a lady. Lauzun or the Mayor will ask that the cross be shown to the room. If you will say publicly, before all gathered here to-night, that you took charge of the cross on the approach of the enemy and that you lost it, I and my friends pledge our word to be silent on the matter that touches your honor."

I looked at him with attention; then I smiled coldly. "Colonel O'Donnell, I make no bargain

with you or your friends," I replied. "As to the matter that touches my honor, I shall know how to deal with that."

I turned from him and entered the large room, now crowded with guests, where I had once seen Ethne and O'Kavanagh. Tyrconnell and Berwick, with their staff, stood at the upper end of the apartment, near the double door. On their right were the Mayor and his Councilors. Sarsfield, Lutterel and Talbot, with two or three other officers of rank, were grouped to the left. M. de Boisseleau presently joined the two dukes. My eyes searched the brilliant throng for Lauzun, but he was absent. Neither could I find Ethne nor Lady Honoria. I had paused just within the door, and soon became conscious of my comrades' cold eyes and averted faces. Presently O'Donnell shouldered his way through the men, his face red and sullen. He joined a group of officers and said a few words, which sent their glances towards me for a moment. I looked round for O'Kavanagh; he was not present.

After an interval of some minutes had elapsed the door was thrown open by a servant in livery. The group of generals with their staffs parted and formed a path. A few seconds later Lauzun ap-

peared leading Lady Honoria by the hand. Behind the pair came Ethne, dressed in silver and white, looking as lovely and as far from me as a star. She walked alone, a lace fan held open before her like a book.

The entrance of the three caused a great stir in the room. Lauzun in his blue satin coat covered with ribbons and gold, with his toupet of curls clustering to a point on the top of his periwig, looked perfectly at ease. There was an air indeed of irony about him and the suggestion of a grimace on his lips. He appeared in no way disconcerted by the fact that he was there to confess his mistake. Lady Honoria, however, was pale, even haggard, I thought.

Lauzun stepped forward, and the murmur of voices in the room died away. A deep hush followed, a look of expectation, of profound interest, showed on each face. For an instant I forgot my own position in the triumph that I and every man of the garrison felt at that moment.

"Messieurs," he called out in French, in a thin penetrating voice. "M. le Maire, gentlemen of the army and citizens, I stand here to recall my words. But I do not see Colonel O'Donnell."

His words were swiftly translated and a great

cry arose for O'Donnell, who, after a brief hesitation, left the group of officers and walked hastily up the room. He saluted the generals and bowed to Lady Honoria. Then he looked with a dark face at Lauzun. "I am here, M. le Duc," he said.

Lauzun smiled and, laying a hand on his heart, bowed. "I congratulate the brave garrison," he said in the same high voice, with its suggestion of mockery, "and the citizens of this ancient city upon their gallant stand. Messieurs, I underestimated your courage and strength."

As he paused, Sarsfield advanced from the group on the right and stood by his side. The general's great height and splendid figure formed a contrast to Lauzun's puny form; he looked proudly down the room.

"My lords, gentlemen of the King's army, Mayor and Councilors of this city," he cried, in a loud, ringing voice, "the Duke de Lauzun has taken back his words! The Prince of Orange brought his roasted apples and our walls stood! The Duke goes to France and promises to send us the cannon."

A cheer rang through the room; it was a minute before the applause ceased; when silence fell O'Donnell shouted boldly:

"M. de Lauzun has learned of what metal we Irish are made!" His voice took an angry note. "Let him carry the tidings to his king that after he had cleared Limerick of his troops and much ammunition, we stood the leaguer three weeks and drove the Dutch and English back."

He flung a defiant glance at Lauzun, and drew back. At the same instant the Mayor left his own group of officials, and, bowing profoundly to the Dukes, saluted Boisseleau and laid a hand on O'Donnell's arm.

"Colonel!" he exclaimed, "my colleagues and I would ask a question. It is rumored, and I would ask if it is true that, assured of our success, you pledged a diamond cross, the gift of His Imperial Majesty of Austria."

I heard a curse drop from some man's lips, then before O'Donnell could answer a storm of voices filled the room. "The cross! the cross!" was shouted. "The wager! Hold up the cross!"

The crisis of the night had come. My pulses quickened. I sought to meet Ethne's gaze. The voice called imperiously; the crowd swayed as men strained to get a view of the cross. I heard laughter, loud exclamations of triumph. Then

suddenly a silence fell, and there at the top of the room I saw Lady Honoria stand alone. She was white to her lips, as if overcome with fear. A pause prolonged, charged with the expectation of the crowd, followed. She trembled and seemed unable to speak. I met Ethne's eyes.

The next second I was walking up the room. I had to force my way at first through the crowd. But I was soon aware of whispers, of craned necks, of faces turned in my direction, and found a path made for me. At the top of the room colors shone; gold, silver flashed before my eyes. I saw figures, gay, brilliant, massed together. And alone a woman's figure, and near hers, but some paces back, the white-robed form of Ethne. Then I felt rather than saw the astonished and indignant gaze of M. de Boisseleau and the Duke of Berwick; the arrested air of the staff, the gloomy, uncomprehending eyes of Tyrconnell; the languid interest on Lauzun's face. My blood tingled, but it was pride, defiance, not shame, that filled my heart.

I drew up before them, my hand held at the salute. For a few seconds I looked from face to face, then turned to Lady Honoria and saluted again. The red was coming and going on her

cheeks, but she met my eyes with a sudden smile. I faced the hushed, expectant crowd, meeting the cold gaze of my comrades, the curious looks of the Frenchmen.

"The cross is lost, gentlemen of the King's army and gentlemen of France!" I cried. "And the fault is mine. Some one, some one who was my foe, placed it in my belt on the day the wager was made, in the house in the orchard. I restored it to the box in which it had been kept, and it was then that I met the eyes of the man who before some of you charged me with its theft—Purcell, the traitor. Since that day the cross has been lost."

A murmur, hostile, incredulous, went through the room. I saw the Frenchmen exchange glances, and the contempt or cold surprise on the Irish officers' faces; I heard Lauzun's light laugh; Tyrconnell's husky voice asking for my name. Then a passion of protest rose up in my heart that I was not believed.

"Messieurs"—it was Lauzun who spoke, a sneer on his lips—"this is a remarkable story. This gentleman has dwelt in the Kingdom of Romance, whither occasionally some of my friends stray. But his narrative is bald, lacking ingenuity."

I could have struck the insolent fool, but in the midst of my rage I heard Sarsfield speak, and my ears instantly hung on his words.

"I believe Lord Iveagh's statement," he said. "Captain Purcell has been proved a traitor. Iveagh"—he turned to me—"I proclaim here before the Duke of Berwick and M. de Boisseleau, before my Lord Tyrconnell and M. le Duc, that I accept your word."

I read his eyes and he must have read the unspoken thanks in mine, my gratitude, my misery. He nodded and gave me a friendly look as he drew back, standing near Lady Honoria, who, silent and rigid, kept her gaze on the ground. The Duke of Berwick turned his face towards the room, and, advancing a step, placed one hand easily on his hip.

"Gentlemen," he said in a cold, balanced tone, impressive because his coolness seemed strange in one so young. "General Sarsfield is an officer of proved valor and high honor. And the latter quality leads him to judge others by his own high standard. My Lord Iveagh's tale is a singular one. He confesses that he found the cross in his belt, and adds that from that day it was lost. It appears to me that my Lord Iveagh has con-

demned himself. M. de Boisseleau," he turned to the Governor, "what is your opinion?"

I glanced at De Boisseleau; his stern eyes told me that he agreed with Berwick.

"M. le Duc," he said in a quick, decisive tone, "the gentleman would have been better advised if he had kept silent. I urged Lord Iveagh to leave the city, and his appearing here to-night, his thrusting himself into our presence is an act of audacity which is an insult to you, M. le Duc, an insult to me as Governor of the city, an insult to the members of the staff and the army, and an insult to the lady in whose hands Colonel O'Donnell placed his cross."

A loud murmur of approval followed his words, to which I had listened in bitter chagrin, my eyes on the ground. I heard the Mayor suggest that I should be rearrested, and the whispers of the staff. Then I caught a rustle of silk, heard a light step advance, and looked up swiftly to find that Lady Honoria stood by my side. The voices in the room sank, died away; a profound silence ensued.

"May I, to whom the cross was given," she said, her clear, treble voice raised till it sounded like some silvery bell struck afar in my ears.

"May I address you, my Lord Dukes and M. de Boisselean, and you, sirs, the Mayor of Limerick and the Honorable Councilors and all my guests? Niall MacGuinness, Lord of Iveagh, has been falsely charged with theft. The traitor Purcell lied about the cross as he lied about the charge of treachery and treason. Colonel O'Donnell, before M. le Duc de Lauzun, who confesses his error, I will restore your cross. But first I will hold it on high that all may see the pledge."

With quickened pulse I turned and faced her, amazed, speechless. She raised her hand high over her head; the lace fell back from her white arm. Something gleamed, a shower of light flashed from the facets of the diamonds as she held the cross aloft. For a moment I gazed; then like a man struck by an unseen foe, I turned and reeled across the floor. A deafening tumult of voices filled the room. But something sang in my ears and I seemed suddenly separated, removed apart at a stroke from all around me. Then I heard my name called, called from a distance; but I staggered to a seat, and, sinking upon it, laid my head on my arms.

After a time I knew that men had gathered round me and that I was addressed by friendly

voices. Then across my numbness rushed a wave of anger or contempt, and I sprang up with blazing eyes. Berwick and De Boisseleau stood by Ethne's side; they appeared to question her.

"It was the woman, Bess Hinks, who stole the cross, M. le Duc," I heard her say. "She stole it from the murderer Hinks, who had killed his brother to possess it. She had learned that Captain Purcell was in communication with the enemy, and when the officer in command at the castle where Lord Iveagh was imprisoned ordered her away she came hither, afraid because of her theft to venture to her own camp. Captain Purcell sent her to Lord Iveagh after his arrest to persuade him to write a letter to Lieutenant Cole. She failed in the attempt, and dropped the cross on the stair. An honest soldier picked it up and gave it, two days ago, to Lady Honoria."

Her voice went on. She told the generals and the staff all that she had heard and seen. And every now and again Lady Honoria spoke, confirming her tale. And I listened, hearing each word she uttered, my eyes on the floor. Presently I knew that she had ceased, and that M. de Boisseleau and the Duke of Berwick stood before

me. I thanked them slowly, mechanically, when they had spoken. But it seemed to me that their words were of no importance; that there was nothing now of importance in the world but the winning of Ethne og.

Suddenly I was aware that men had hurried up the room, were grasping my hands, were offering apologies—O'Donnell, O'Carroll and those who had condemned me in the house on the rampart, my own comrades in Sarsfield's horse and many others. And the procession continued for a time, while I stood with a rigid smile, making set answers, my soul with Ethne.

It was Sarsfield who freed me from the crowd. He led me to the inner room, and brought me a goblet of wine. But I put it down untasted, and stood before the crucifix before which his wife had knelt the last night of the seige. After a long interval I heard him speak to some one and a door closed. When I turned I found that I was alone with Ethne. A colored lamp hung on the wall, and she stood in the ray, with her white and silver dress warmed by the tint. Her eyes dwelt on the crucifix.

"I obeyed your command," I said. She made no answer and I approached. "I await another

command," I continued. "Shall I stay in this land or go to France?"

"Stay in this land," she replied, looking down, "for the King's cause."

"Oh! Ethne of the courage! You who have saved me, if I am to stay hold out your hand."

She obeyed and raised her eyes. Then I knew that she, the elusive lady, Ethne, queen of beauty, had looked in the face of Angus og, the god of love, and was mine, and I drew her to my heart.

I saw O'Kavanagh no more till the field of Aughrim, eleven months later. I saw him then in the morning, sitting on his horse, awaiting the charge. I saw him again later on that day of woe, lying dead among his comrades on that bloody slope.

Purcell had been shot before Lauzun left for France, and the boy Cecil, whom I questioned, declared that my foe had slain Cole after he had asked and Cole had refused to supply evidence that would appear to confirm Purcell's charge against me. But Mor Ni Cohane heard the tale with veiled eyes; she had seen blood, she said, on the hands that had done the deed. So Cole's murder remains, in a measure, a mystery, though I think that Purcell killed him. Yet at times I

recall the first meeting between Cole and O'Kavanagh on the field where Sarsfield blew up the guns, and remember that Cole for a moment shrank from him. Was it a prescience of his fate, or was it the effect of the chill air of the dawn? I am a soldier, and with facts, not dreams, my profession deals. Ethne tells me that she has dreamed twice since the battle of Aughrim that O'Kavanagh has stood before her and held up unstained hands for her gaze. So we offer a prayer for his soul and leave the mystery to God.

THE END

*A Few
Press Opinions
of
F. M. Buckles
& Co.'s
Late Publications*



A Rich Man's Daughter

By MRS. J. H. RIDDELL

392 pages, size 7½ x 5, cloth. Ink and Gold, \$1.25

It is not given to many novelists to portray the weaknesses and wickednesses of men and women and at the same time to preserve what may be called a "high moral tone." There is too often a tendency to extenuate baseness because it is coupled with some admirable quality, and vice not seldom goes unpunished because its votary is beautiful. Of Mrs. J. H. Riddell this cannot be said. She panders not at all to the popular feeling of tolerance and even liking for a handsome or brave villain. Sinners whom she introduces to us meet their deserts, and no one can complain of her stories that they tend to debase or corrupt youth. On the other hand, they are full of life and adventure. The plot of the one before us, "A Rich Man's Daughter" is sufficiently out of the common to be attractive even if it be not quite original. And it gives scope for some admirable character-drawing. To tell the story would be to deprive the reader of more than half the interest in the book.—*Globe*.

Mrs. J. H. Riddell is among the most capable of writers who are engaged in catering for the tastes of fiction readers, and it is with assured feelings of pleasure to come that we take a new book of hers into our hand. The characters are finished studies, and many of the scenes are drawn so vividly as to stick in the memory as though we had ourselves been present. "A Rich Man's Daughter" is, indeed, a novel to be read by all who wish to make themselves acquainted with the best fiction that each season produces.—*Times*.

It is no unusual thing for us to have readable romances from Mrs. J. H. Riddell, and in "A Rich Man's Daughter" she has not departed from her good custom. The book is carefully written and pains have been taken to make the characters creatures of clay, instead of puppets with sawdust substituted for flesh and blood.—*Journal*.

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Marjory Moore

By ADELINE SERGEANT

426 pages, size 7½ x 5. Ink and Gold, \$1.25

This is a strongly written story, with a vein of tragedy running through its length. The reader almost immediately conceives a peculiar sympathy for the little country girl whom the benevolent old Squire, with a love for music, assists to a career of fame upon the stage as a fair violinist. Marjory's fortunes, like those of many others who court the applause of the fickle public, suffer a collapse, and the arm upon which she expected to lean fails her; but in the end she finds a heart of gold and the story ends happily. It is really a charming romance, and will please a large share of the reading public.

The well-known authoress has never given us a stronger picture of humanity in its various phases. Marjory is decidedly feminine, and naturally chooses the lover whose handsome face appeals to her girlish heart; but through bitter trials she learns her lesson, and when the storms have passed finds a safe harbor in the heart of the honorable lover who has lived but to serve her since girlhood.—*American*.

It is very rarely our good fortune to meet with a novel that is written well from the first page to the last, and when this luck has come in our way, we are not slow to return good for good, by cordially giving thanks for pleasure received, and by hastening to tell our readers where to obtain fiction that is a credit to English literature. "Marjory Moore" is a novel of an old-fashioned flavor, but none the less pleasant because of this quality. It borrows nothing from melodrama.—*News*.

There is much skill in the study of the female characters, and the story is attractive.—*Courier*.

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The Golden Tooth

By J. MACLAREN COBBAN

306 pages, size 7½ x 5, Cloth. Ink and Gold, \$1.25

"The Golden Tooth," by J. Maclaren Cobban, is an amusing story with a Sherlock Holmes theme. The author knows how to write a fascinating and entertaining tale, and if he shows a lofty indifference to real life in the drawing of one or two of his characters, he is to be forgiven. The real hero of the story is Townshend, otherwise "The Marquis," who takes an interest in explaining the mystery surrounding the murder of the young Squire Kesteven. The golden tooth furnishes the clew by which the assassin is traced and the squire's stepmother plays a principal part in the plot. She is a well-known character, who takes the role of a petticoated villain. The young farmer-soldier suspected of the crime turns out to be the real squire and the novel ends happily for all concerned. The astute Townshend is a man in whom the reader can place reliance. There is a comfortable feeling that he will deliver the innocent and discover the guilty. That he fulfills even the most sanguine expectations proves his claim to recognition as a first-class literary personage.—*Milwaukee Sentinel*.

"The Golden Tooth," written by J. Maclaren Cobban and published by F. M. Buckles & Co., of New York, is a rattling good detective story of much more than the average merit. It is a live book from the quarrel on the opening page to the final triumph of innocence. It draws much more upon the sympathies of the reader than the average "hunt-down-the-guilty-party" stories, and the delineation of the character of Jenny Wren is far above the average character studies of women. Another delightful character of the tale is Townshend, the "Markis" who does a great deal of good detective work for the sake of humanity and the cause of "the good little woman." The story is a good one and to be recommended to any one who likes stories with human nature, a good deal of swing to them and those that leave a "good taste in the mouth."—*Syracuse Herald*.

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Two Cousins and a Castle

By MRS. H. LOVETT CAMERON

268 pages, size 7½ x 5, Cloth, Ink and Gold, \$1.25

Clever and interesting in the list of summer novels is "Two Cousins and a Castle," by Mrs. H. Lovett Cameron (F. M. Buckles & Co., New York). Portalloc is the castle which figures so largely in the story, and the two cousins are the grandson and granddaughter of its owner, Mr. Eardley, an English country gentleman with great family pride and little money. He had quarreled with his two children, now dead—with the son for marrying a governess; with the daughter for becoming the wife of a manufacturer by the unendurable name of Spinks. In his lonely old age the grandfather sought to marry the cousins to each other, hyphenating the name Spinks with Eardley, and with the Spinks millions restore Portalloc to its former grandeur. How the cousins fail to carry out the plans of their elders makes the story, which ends in a happy marriage and Portalloc for the girl, but with a sudden and unnecessary tragedy for the boy. Barring this unpleasant feature of its ending the book is commendable for vacation reading.

—*The Chicago Tribune*, Aug. 3, 1901

This pleasing romance is sure to make its way among readers who like the love story as developed with tragic features. The "cousins" of the story are "Amabel Eardley" and "Tom Spinks." The castle is at Portalloc, England, overlooking the sea, and is a restored ruin; its walls having been partially demolished by Cromwell's cannon. "Mr. Eardley," grandfather of the cousins has planned a meeting, but Cupid and Melphomene interfere. Cupid wills it that "Amabel" falls in love with "Achille de Vernet," a Frenchman, and that "Tom" becomes smitten with "Dorothy Duke," a charming but heartless adventuress. Melphomene wills it that "Dorothy," after couquetting with "Tom" marries "Spinks, Sr.," his father, a wealthy manufacturer. The story is full of interest and clever touches.

—*Indianapolis Sentinel*

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9-11 East 16th Street, New York

A State Secret

By B. M. CROKER

318 pages, size 7½ x 5, Cloth. Ink and Gold, \$1.25

Mrs. Croker's signature, either to a long or short story, has come to be generally accepted as security for a pleasant hour. The present series of sketches is no exception. There is little out of the ordinary in the experiences related in this book, if a certain grisly ghost story, which seems to have strayed into more cheerful company, be excepted. But whether the scene is in dingy lodgings in a faded Dublin street, among the Munster peasantry, on a Scotch moor, or away in an up-country Indian station, the people are very real. In the story which gives the title to the volume we meet an eccentric but very philosophical old French woman whose room is filled with lumber of all descriptions. She dislikes exceedingly to have the apartment swept, and declares that she rather likes dust; "I am getting used to it," she calmly announces. "We shall all come to dust ourselves ere long, and what harm is the poor dust doing? We may be dispersing our ancestors!" These sketches are brief, but they leave a defined impression, and one feels that it would be agreeable to prolong some of the acquaintances here made. However, as Mrs. Croker well knows, one of the qualities of a readable short story is that it stimulates rather than satisfies.—*The Washington Post*.

"A State Secret, and Other Stories," by B. M. Croker, is an excellent collection of Irish stories by a known and popular writer. Mrs. Croker has published many novels that have succeeded, and have deserved to succeed, one of those best known being "The Real Lady Hilda," and one of the best, one which has not so many readers, is called "Beyond the Pale." These stories are in the same vein as the books; they are the work of a writer who knows her subject, and has a very neat touch. It is reasonably safe to take up anything she writes with the expectation of being entertained and the certainty that the entertainment will not be of the kind one is more or less ashamed of feeling.

—*Hartford Times*.

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The Luck of a Lowland Laddie

By *MAY CROMMELIN*

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May Crommelin's story of "The Luck of a Lowland Laddie" is a bright, pretty and thoroughly readable love story. The hero owes his luck to the fact of his being the seventh son of a seventh son, and every seven years some stroke of fortune increases his happiness. His life is sketched from the moment of his birth. He is poor, and, of course, has a charming sweetheart—and what would a story like this be if, with the same inevitableness, he did not find a will bequeathing to him vast estates. Then the will is stolen, and Jock goes out to Peru to work for Elsie and incidentally to have an exciting time, and some person tells her he is dead. But he comes back, and everything ends very happily.—*San Francisco Bulletin*.

This is another book of superior interest, unpretentious yet charming which merits the reader's attention. It is a very pretty story, the chief charm of which, Jock Ramsay, is a Scottish lad who is moreover a seventh son of a seventh son, of whom the village oracle, an aged sybil, predicts at his birth a checkered and very interesting career. Jock has a life full of adventure in several climes. There is a charming, lovable young lady in the story, who has Jock's love and who loves him, and there is a will bequeathing him a large fortune, which Jock and his sweetheart discover in its mysterious hiding place. Jock has a rascally brother, who, when Jock was supposed to be dead, causes no end of trouble to Jock's sweetheart and plays a desperate game. Jock wins at last. There is a very pretty ending to this delightful little story, and it is a story which one eagerly reads to the finish. Old and half forgotten superstitions of Scotland play a part in the tale.

—*New Haven Courier Journal*.

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A Traitor in London

By **FERGUS HUME**

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Fergus Hume needs no introduction as a writer of stories which are worth reading, especially if you like a mixture of love, danger, and mystery; and the author of "The Mystery of a Hansom Cab" there showed his ability to handle well the latter element in fiction.

His latest novel is entitled "A Traitor in London," and he has seized upon the recently uppermost theme in the public mind—the Boer war.

The mystery is well handled to the end, the characters are very natural people and politics in England and real campaigning in South Africa are introduced in order. "A Traitor in London" is a clever story, entertaining throughout, and well sustains the author's reputation.—*Boston Times*.

Mr. Hume has within the last five years placed himself in the same class with Dr. Doyle as a writer of detective stories. He has developed the detective instinct and is able to weave about his plot a tangle of intricate and confusing incidents which leave the reader altogether in the dark until the author chooses to turn the limelight upon his own mystery. In the present work Mr. Hume deals with the exciting scenes in London just previous to the outbreak of the Boer war, and despite his intensely pro-British sentiment he has made a book which will interest all lovers of this character of fiction.—*Indianapolis Sentinel*.

Fergus Hume has written a good romance in which the Boer war plays an important part. A Boer spy and his machinations open the story. His cunning and effrontery mark him out as a strong character. He is not so zealous in the pursuit of his country's interests as in the winning of a young lady who loves another.

Murder and mystery puzzle the reader, and there are many surprises.—*Louisville Courier-Journal*.

The mystery of the story is a murder committed in England, and it is a mystery which puzzles the reader to the end, ingeniously leading the reader from one guess to another, and finally affording a real surprise. The novel is one to please all classes of readers.—*Pittsburgh Press*.

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Daunay's Tower

By ADELINE SERGEANT

405 pages, size 7½x5, Cloth, Ink and Gold, \$1.25

In certain passages suggestive of "East Lynne," in others recalling "Jane Eyre," and in plot remindful of Wilkie Collins' ingenious contrivances, "Daunay's Tower" appears as a late exponent of that school of fiction which delighted the novel readers of a quarter of a century ago.—*Chicago Record*.

"Daunay's Tower," by Adeline Sergeant, is a novel of exceptional power and merit. The plot is skilfully woven out of somewhat unpromising material, and the air of improbability which marks the opening chapter soon vanishes and gives place to the natural and easily possible. The leading characters are not only distinct and well drawn, but are more completely drawn than is often the case in the light novel; the literary style is not that of the space writer. The subordinate characters are all natural—not lay figures.—*Philadelphia Telegraph*.

Though based on a rather improbable foundation, Miss Adeline Sergeant's new novel shows no falling off in regard to vigor and imagination and deserves to be welcomed as a more than ordinary piece of fiction. The pathos of the situations is tenderly drawn, and the heroine holds the interest and sympathy of the reader.—*Albany Times Union*.

This is a forceful and interesting novel. It has a combination of incident and movement that gives it an attractiveness that more than compensates for infelicities of expression and a certain clumsiness in the handling of the plot.—*Baltimore Sun*.

Adeline Sergeant gives to us a good, vigorous romance in "Daunay's Tower"—just the sort of book to be a royal companion for a summer afternoon.—*American*.

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The Conquest of London

By DOROTHEA GERARD

321 pages, size 7½ x 5, Cloth, Ink, Gold, \$1.25

Dorothea Gerard writes stories which are bright and interesting without being particularly strong or aiming at anything beyond pleasant entertainment. "The Conquest of London" is not an historical novel, as the name might imply. It relates the experiences of four nice English girls, sisters, who having been brought up in an out-of-the-way place and inherited a small sum of money, went to London to see something of society. Out of these commonplace materials the author makes quite a readable story.

—*Indianapolis Journal*.

"The Conquest of London," by Dorothea Gerard, relates the adventures of four orphan girls between fifteen and twenty, who live upon the modest income of one hundred and twenty pounds a year in a little cottage at Gilham, miles from a neighboring village. After many severe struggles things shape themselves right in the end and everything has a happy finish. The book is brightly written, a pretty little story which will be certain to find favor with the readers.—*Albany Times Union*.

This is a healthy novel of the entertaining type, a capital story of the adventures of four sisters who are left in a village well nigh penniless. An uncle leaves them a thousand pounds apiece, with which they go to London and see social life—as long as their money lasts. They get through with it speedily and are forced to return to their village home. There they see some bitter days, but all ends happily by the oldest sister's marriage to a rich man of the neighborhood.—*Louisville Courier-Journal*.

Dorothea Gerard is the famous authoress of "A Forgotten Sin," "The Impediment," etc., but in this later work—"The Conquest of London"—she has brought forth a masterpiece which will make this famous English authoress a world-wide reputation as a writer of fiction.

—*Southern Star*.

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My Lady's Diamond's

By *ADELINE SERGEANT*

316 pages, size 7½ x 5, cloth. Ink and Gold, \$1.25

"My Lady's Diamonds," by Adeline Sergeant. This story proceeds on somewhat familiar lines, but the incidents are of such a startling, sensational description that they permit the reader little opportunity for critical reflection until the last page is reached. In the first place Lady Rockingham's diamonds are stolen, and suspicion is cast by the old device of a purloined clock on Joan Carrington, the daughter of an old friend who is staying with her. Even Geoffrey Brandon, Joan's lover, believes the unfounded accusation, for did he not one evening see Joan in her familiar dark-blue cloak, with the rose-colored lining, hand over the diamonds to a tall, sinister-looking individual with a long black moustache curled up at the points, amid the ruins of a neighboring castle? With lover-like obtuseness he acquaints Joan with the condemnatory evidence he has in his possession, and naturally she is all aflame at the want of confidence he shows in her. There is also staying with Lady Rockingham a quiet, dove-like creature, Nina Townley, who in a few effective touches contrives to accentuate the situation. The remainder of the narrative is taken up with Geoffrey's efforts to clear up the mystery of the diamonds and discover the real perpetrator of the robbery, for with Joan's indignant denial all his old belief in her goodness, purity, etc., returns. It can hardly be said that he is a heaven-born detective, but by sticking unflinchingly to his task, and showing no little courage and energy, he manages at last to fasten the crime on the right parties, and the curtain falls on general apologies to poor Joan for the pain that has been caused her. The story is a very good specimen of its class, and the incidents, while never completely outraging the limits of probability, are of such a description as thoroughly to absorb the reader's attention.—*Publishers' Circular.*

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The Mysterious Burglar

By GEO. E. WALSH

247 pages, size 7 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 4 $\frac{1}{4}$. Ink and Gold, \$1.25

"The Mysterious Burglar" is a first-rate detective story.
—*Chicago Record-Herald*.

"The Mysterious Burglar" is a very good story. The mystery is cleverly handled to the end and is a thoroughly up-to-date tale.—*Toledo Blade*.

Mr. Walsh is a bright story-teller.
—*New Haven Courier Journal*.

It is a peculiar and and intensely interesting story.
—*Cleveland Recorder*.

It is an exceptionally good story. From the outset it is interesting, and the plot is so well handled that surprises are as constant as in the life of a burglar himself.
—*Philadelphia Telegraph*.

"The Mysterious Burglar," which appears in the list of the best selling books, is said to be founded upon fact. As a study of modern criminology in the guise of fiction, it is certainly worth perusal.—*New York Journal*.

"The Mysterious Burglar," by George E. Walsh, recently published by F. M. Buckles & Co., is now in its third edition. Many letters asking about the possibilities of hypnotism described in the book, and, in particular, if there is any foundation in fact for the story, have been received by the author.—*New York Times*.

A story more singular has seldom been written and the conception is daring in the extreme. The plot is puzzling, and as the various mysteries unravel the reader is shocked and surprised. The iniquity has its daily parallel, however, and taking it as a whole, the author has been successful in producing a really admirable work.

—*Albany Times Union*.

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